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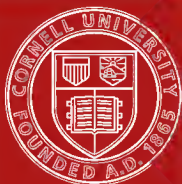
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**THE FARMER'S BOOKSHELF**

Edited by

**KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD**





# THE COUNTY AGENT AND THE FARM BUREAU

BY

M. C. BURRITT

VICE-DIRECTOR OF EXTENSION, NEW YORK STATE  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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To

MY COLLEAGUES AND ASSOCIATES

who in conference and otherwise have helped to crystallize the ideals and points of view herein expressed, and especially

To

H. E. BABCOCK

whose energy and good judgment have been a constant source of inspiration and of confidence during our eight years of public service together,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.



## EDITOR'S PREFACE

The present system of American agricultural education in its various forms is the result, broadly speaking, of the application of science to practice. For a long period, the field of this scientific agriculture was almost wholly that of production. Special students of agriculture were endeavoring to discover the laws of plant and animal growth and the interrelations of soil, climate, and plant. More recently, efforts are being made to work out in the same fashion the laws of economic and social development. Thus, the field of scientific agriculture has broadened to include all the interests of farmers and their communities.

A remarkable development of this broadened field of agriculture has been the recent extension of agricultural education. Teachers in the agricultural colleges at first gave their efforts largely to the teaching of resident students. Then gradually the "professors" began to go out to talk to the farmers. After a while came the Farmers' Institutes, where working farmers and agricultural specialists joined forces in a program of instruction and discussion. The Act of Congress, known as the Smith-Lever Act, passed in 1914 opened on a national basis a wonderful chapter in agricultural extension service, and the County Agent became the clearing house of information and suggestion between the working farmer and the educational institutions.

This extension service, combined with the broadened definition of agriculture, and further influenced by the work of the County Farm Bureaus, has made this County

Agent one of the most influential of present-day leaders in rural affairs. The task demands a man of rather rare capacity, combining farm experience, practical sense and quick adaptability, with accurate scientific knowledge and the appreciation of the larger issues of agriculture and country life. Mr. Burritt, in this book, shows what is involved in this man's work and how he can be of greatest use to the farm people. It is a valuable discussion of the varied work and widespread influence of an entirely new type of agricultural leader.

KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD.

## PREFACE

The second decade of the twentieth century has been an eventful one for farmers. World economic conditions and especially the great war brought to its culmination the trend of affairs already well under way, which restored the farmers' purchasing power and consequent prosperity. But this was attained only to be lost in the greatest slump in the purchasing power of agricultural products ever known in the United States. The reversal of the ratio of rural to urban population in the last half century has focused attention on the problems of marketing and distribution. The problem and a better understanding of its nature and solution together have stimulated a great period of organization among farmers. Prosperity brought with it new and effective means of education. Both in this agricultural organization and in the new means of education the county agent and the farm bureau have had a large part, which should be better understood and appreciated.

This volume is not intended to be a history of the county agent or of the farm bureau, although most of the essential facts and events of their first ten years of existence are here recorded. It is yet too early in its life to write a history of this movement. We are too close to its origin and early efforts. Whether this history will finally be but a brief sketch of the meteoric rise and fall of a promising agricultural effort, or whether it will be an account of the working out of a great sane, constructive, forward-looking idea, is yet to be revealed. The outcome of the play of

present forces we must await with such patience as we can. Great movements are not worked out in a decade.

While we cannot see the events of the future, we can study the past and the present, and gather from them an interpretation and suggestion for our guidance in the future. In spite of the fact that we are all living in the midst of these events, many of us have but a hazy and indefinite knowledge of them. Others have knowledge of details but do not fully understand their relationship or significance. Still others are confused by conflicting events and ideals. If this book is of service in better understanding the aims and ideals of the movement, it will have served its chief purpose.

It is hoped that county agents, executive and community committeemen engaged in the work will find it helpful as a record and interpretation of the facts, a technical aid in their work, and perhaps somewhat of a guide. Students of the movement, whether sympathetic or critical of it, will, the author hopes, find it a useful reference and a help in understanding its origin and early ideals. Farmers generally should find Part I, especially the chapters dealing with the farm bureau organization, county, state and national, useful in trying to understand and to judge of its future. Observers and critics will find herein expressed a point of view and ideals which it is hoped may have had some small part in shaping up the movement. Indeed, the opportunity to record these ideals and points of view is one of the chief incentives to the writing of this volume.

Without any desire to be personal—but in simple justice to the reader who may consider whether he is likely to be justified in perusing these pages further—the writer feels that he should state his experience and qualifications. This book is written out of knowledge gained through personal contact with the movement since its inception; and



this experience and contact has been both from the giving and receiving end. As a field agent of the United States Department of Agriculture, and later as the editor of an agricultural paper, he studied the problems of the territory where the first county agent in the North was installed and, indeed, had some part in the setting up of this first county organization. Four years as a supervisor of county agents and four more as an extension director has kept him in a constant and live touch with hundreds of county agents and their work. He was also present and had some small part in the organization of both his State and the National Farm Bureau Federations. And lastly, but not least in importance, he has been a member of one of the first county farm bureau associations (Monroe County, N. Y.) from its beginning and has profited much in his farming through the help of the local county agent, and been able to appreciate the limitations and shortcomings of both county agent and farm bureau.

The thanks of the author are due to H. E. Babcock, Jay Coryell, L. R. Simons, and to Professors D. J. Crosby, Dwight Sanderson, and M. Robinson for reading and making suggestions on parts of the manuscript. He also acknowledges the cuts kindly loaned by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the New York State College of Agriculture. He is especially indebted to M. C. Wilson of the Department for selecting many of the cuts and obtaining permission to use them.

M. C. BURRITT.

ITHACA, N. Y.

*April 1, 1922.*



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## **PART I**

### ***THE COUNTY AGENT'S SERVICES, OR THE COUNTY AGENT AT WORK***





## CHAPTER I

### THE PROGRAM OF WORK

PERHAPS the first question of large importance which confronts a county agent in beginning his work in a county, be it old or new, is "What shall I do?" Likewise the farmer often wonders just what the functions of the county agent are.

If the county has had an agent before and if his work has been properly organized and conducted, there will be a definite program of work, and the answer to the question will be easy. The county agent's principal task will then be to carry out the program which has been outlined for him and the attainment of which, in reasonable measure, constitutes his main job. But if he is the first agent in the county and there is no definitely worked out program or plan of work, then his first job, after acquainting himself with the local situation and leadership, should be to assist the local people to develop a program.

As this is the problem of all newly organized counties and as many older organized counties are still without good constructive programs of work, it may be well to begin our study of this question at the very beginning.

#### WHY A PROGRAM OF WORK?

To be successful every public movement must have objectives or goals which it seeks to reach. The soundness and the general desirability of the objectives sought will in the end determine the support which it can command

and hence its ability to achieve its goal. But it is not enough merely to have a general objective. Many good movements with abstractly general objectives have failed simply because they were too general, and were never put into concrete form with the necessary machinery and the means behind them to accomplish their ends.

Such a concrete proposal of specific objectives and of how it is expected to accomplish them is called a program of work. If applied to a single community it is considered as a community program. When these objectives are applied collectively to all the communities of the county with an organization behind it to carry out the proposals it is known as a county program of work.

The general objective of the county agent movement was and continues to be agricultural education of persons engaged in farming and home making, more especially those outside the school system. As we shall see, it was the hope and the expectation of those who conceived the idea and the method, that it would increase the efficiency and the profitableness of the processes of farm production and marketing, as well as increase the intelligence and elevate the standards of living of the persons living on the farms. Such an objective of course soon commanded the support of educators and of agricultural leaders generally as well as of the public. But it did not find sufficient expression in action to give it force and application in the localities and counties until it was interpreted into concrete proposals and applied to the agricultural problems of specific communities and counties. And nothing in the whole movement has been so useful in giving definiteness of purpose to it, and in securing for it the necessary support of farmers and of appropriating bodies, as has the county program of work. It has been the rallying point of farmer and public alike.

## ELEMENTS IN A GOOD PROGRAM

Any program of improvement that is not based on the needs of the persons it is aimed to benefit invites failure from the start. More than that the ultimate success of the program is very likely to be determined by how vitally the proposals affect these needs, as well as by how the exact aims actually do meet them when applied to the problem. This phase of a good program then becomes a question of how to determine accurately what the real needs of the communities and of the county are.

As an example of a county program not meeting a need, there comes to mind a non-fruit growing but chiefly dairy county, where during the first two or three years of county agent work, the renovation of old apple orchards was emphasized. This interested a few farmers but not the rank and file. In this county the number of farmers whose orchards were affected was thirty in 1914, and twenty-six in 1915. In 1918 the number had fallen to five, and since then practically no work affecting orchards has been done in the county. On the other hand, a part of the dairy program, namely the number of cows tested for milk production has increased from six hundred and thirty in 1915 to fourteen hundred and ninety-three in 1920. The one item in the program failed because it did not vitally affect the welfare of any considerable number of individuals. The other persisted because it did touch on a widespread problem in a helpful way.

*Definiteness.* Definiteness is a merit much to be desired in any plan of work. A simple test to apply to a program to determine whether or not it has this necessary characteristic is to inquire if it answers three questions: What is to be done? How much is it proposed to do this year? How is it expected to accomplish the results desired? Such

a county program should also be simple in its elements and not try to deal with the whole range of problems in general terms.

What is done by the agricultural agent will usually fall under the heads of the improvement of (1) soils, (2) crops, (3) animals, (4) economic farm management and marketing, and (5) social conditions. What is done by the home demonstration agent may usually be classified under the headings (1) food, (2) clothing, (3) shelter or household management, (4) family health, and (5) social conditions. Both agents will probably do work with boys and girls and with certain other special problems.

But what is to be done must be more definite than this. It must show what particular kinds or types of soils, crops and animals, and what special marketing, health, food and clothing problems need improvement in the particular community or county. How much it is proposed to do, and how it is expected to do it, are essential to a sufficient definiteness in a county program of work, to insure understanding and command intelligent support. Goals for the year should be stated as the farmer thinks of results, in terms of bushels, pounds, acres, animals and so forth, improved.

*Balance With Emphasis.* Another element which a good program must have is balance, although it should have this with proper emphasis on a few of the most important things. It will be an unusual condition where all the farmers or communities are interested in one thing. A few things will always be of outstanding or immediate importance, particularly those which fall into the groups of marketing, health and social relations. Even in these fields some persons have a greater interest than do others.

The type of farming and the special economic and social problems of a community or county will determine the

parts of the program which are to be specifically emphasized. There will always be those farmers who want to build up their soils, others to whom crop or animal improvement seems to be the big thing, while just now economic problems loom large to the majority of farmers. The program should be so well balanced as to meet the more important needs of the rural population as a whole, rather than those of the membership alone, without going to the extreme of trying to gratify every whim or minor interest of everybody. Too broad or detailed a program is likely to result in scattered effort, or "a little bit of everything and not much of anything."

Having secured such a desirable balance of work as will not only meet necessarily varied needs but will also promote efficiency because it permits a good distribution of time and effort throughout the year, effort should then be concentrated on one or two things at a time, as the nature of the problem demands and the time of the year permits. Too many things must not divide either the agent's or the farmer's attention at the same time, if the best results are to be secured.

#### PERMANENCY IN PROGRAMS

The very nature of the problems dealt with precludes both immediate or complete solution of most of them. Soils are built up and improved only through long periods of consistent and wise effort. Principles are taught and put into practice through repeated use and proof. Health is acquired through the long continued application of correct eating, good clothing, and right living principles and is maintained by the same procedure.

Any program to be most worth while must be forward looking and permanent. It must anticipate years of related

and well organized effort. As has already been pointed out, how vitally the program touches the real needs of the county, will in large measure determine its permanency. Of course particular items in the program will need to be emphasized more at one time than at another, as, for example, the raising of more home-grown feed in a dairy section when feed is very high than when it is very low, or, the protection of plants or animals against disease when conditions are especially favorable for it. Emergencies are always likely to arise which will and which should modify the program at least temporarily. In general, it would seem that not less than seventy-five per cent of the agent's time should be devoted to the permanent program, leaving about twenty-five per cent for emergencies and for miscellaneous effort, more or less of which is probably inevitable. But when the percentage of effort on this miscellaneous work rises above twenty-five per cent, then the situation should have the attention of the local committee and of the supervising agencies.

#### BUILDING A PROGRAM

Since it is clear that a program cannot have large value except as it vitally affects the needs of the community and the county, it follows that some means should be devised through which to determine accurately what these needs really are. Can there be any better means than the coming together of representative committees and councils of farmers from the communities to consider their needs and to determine upon the best ways to meet them? The people who have lived long in a community have learned its handicaps and its limitations as well as its advantages. Especially if they have discussed their local problems in their grange and club meetings, they will realize what

should be done to improve the farming and living conditions in their home communities.

At first it may take a good deal of discussion to bring out the essential things, especially if the persons coming together have not been in the habit of studying and trying to analyze their problems together. There will be difference of opinion according to viewpoint and experience. Some will have a larger vision of the possibilities of their communities' development than others. A few problems will stand out because they are of immediate and pressing importance. Others will be so commonplace as to be almost overlooked at first. But out of the discussion and consideration, especially after a year or two of experience, will usually be evolved a well-balanced program which will represent real needs.

*Project Committees.* The practical machinery to be used in the making of county and community programs usually consists of community committees, usually divided into project committees according to interests. Since farm bureau and county agent work are necessarily organized on the county unit basis for financial and administrative reasons, it is usually necessary to organize the program on a county basis also.

So county project committees representing the various interests common to the county, such as market milk, fruit and poultry for the men, and nutrition or clothing on the part of the women, or organization, schools and health as matters of common interests should be selected. When these project committees, meeting in advance at convenient times, have determined upon their recommendations, they report either directly to the annual meeting or to the executive committee, or in some states to the county advisory council made up of the community committees or representatives of all of the communities in the county. The final

action of the association either directly or through this council determines the program to be recommended for the county for a given period. But this program cannot be finally operative until approved by the county executive committee which must reconcile it with its financial resources and with the time and the ability of its agents to carry it out with the help of local organization. This may mean cutting it down, omitting what seem to be the least important or the least urgent of the recommendations.<sup>1</sup>

*The College Specialist.* There is another aspect of program building that requires consideration. In spite of the fact that farmers necessarily live with their problems—and perhaps partly because they do—they are not always able correctly to diagnose them and to prescribe the remedies. Perhaps it is because they live too close to them, because they are not familiar with experience elsewhere which would permit comparison and be suggestive. This inevitable situation constitutes the need for and at the same time is the opportunity of the trained specialists of the colleges of agriculture for service.

Technically prepared by a study both of the principles which underlie the problems of farmers and of the problems themselves, each in his own particular field, fortified with an intimate knowledge of the findings of science as to ways to meet them, and well acquainted with the experience of other farmers in meeting them because of his wide opportunity for observation in other counties, the specialist may be of great service to a community or county group in analyzing its problems and in determining upon the remedies.

In practice if such specialists can meet with county project committees, each in his special field, in planning

<sup>1</sup> The machinery of program making is also discussed in Chapter X, page 205, and Chapter XI, page 220.





Community programs are best worked out by small community committees of men and women representing various important interests in the community. They usually meet around a table at the home of the chairman or another member of the committee. This particular meeting was held in Newcastle County, Delaware. Members are examining a fireless cooker presumably with the view of undertaking to increase the use of this home convenience in the community.



programs, the specialist gains a truer and more intimate and hence more practical knowledge of the needs of the communities, counties, and of the state, and the committee gains the broader knowledge and viewpoint, the technical information and the more or less expert advice of the specialist. A better program almost invariably results from such coöperation. Moreover, the basis for the necessary coöperation in carrying out the program is at once established.

Thus, there may be put into actual practice the partnership between science and experience, and the college and farm bureau machinery function together ideally. The county agents should be the guiding hand to bring this about, and they will be the necessary middlemen who will establish helpful contacts between specialists and farmers.

#### SOME TYPICAL PROGRAMS

These general considerations in program making will undoubtedly be clearer if they are applied to different programs constructed to fit different and widely variable conditions. Examples of good and poor characteristics may also be pointed out. These have been selected from a wide territory extending from Maine to California and from Alabama to New York. The fundamental conception of stating the problem in relation to the apparent need is surprisingly uniform. The difference in form is more noticeable though less important. Programs in different counties in the same state are quite uniform, indicating much suggestion and help from the state colleges and the supervising offices.

*Program No. 1.* This program from Kentucky has the merit of stating the problems and the limitations which they impose on the farming of the community so that we

may better judge whether the proposals to meet them are sound and wise. It is desirable also to have such a statement of limitations constantly in mind. The remedies proposed are both general and permanent and specific and definite for 1921. The setting of a definite goal for the year's work itself helps to realize the objectives and thus makes for greater achievement. The program is apparently fairly comprehensive and should touch the community's farming widely, since it embraces some fundamental work with three important crops, three kinds of livestock, and touches in a vital way the future welfare of the boys and girls both in the schools and out of them. The program is deficient in that it makes no provision for the interests of women, a vitally important part of any community life, nor adequately for the broad general problems of the community. Local leadership for each phase of the program is fixed and this should result in larger achievement. This community program is correlated with the programs for other communities through county project committees for each important interest made up of community representatives especially concerned with the problem, into a county program, which then becomes combination of community programs.

*Program No. 2.* Lack of definiteness, most of its items being too briefly stated to bring out their real intent, is the first characteristic of this Alabama program which strikes one. This and the fact that many of its actual accomplishments bear little or no relation to the original plan, suggest that it probably did not have sufficient consideration in the beginning. Perhaps it was made by the county agent alone without the help of committees of farmers or specialists of the colleges who had really studied the problems. Evidently, too, the original plan did not fully meet the agricultural needs of the county, or it would not have

PROGRAM No. 1

A COMMUNITY PROGRAM OF WORK IN KENTUCKY

<i>Farm Activities</i>	<i>Limits of Profit</i>	<i>Remedy</i>	<i>To be Done in 1921</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Goal</i>
TOBACCO	Market Cost of production and poor labor	Coöp. mark. Better labor Lime-phosphate clover	Use of limestone	Wisdom Fulcher	200 tons
CORN	Soil fertility and poor seed	Lime-phos. clover Field selection and test	Field selection dem.	H. H. Fulcher	10 men selecting from field
HAY	Low yield	Lime and cover crops	Cover crops	Will Hall	200 A.
DAIRY CATTLE	Poor production and poor feeding	Bal. ration	Dem. in feeding	Frank Yancey	3 demonstrations
HOGS	Market Poor feed	Balanced ration	Feeding dem.	Lee Morton	3 feeding demonstrations
POULTRY	Poor layers "Scrubs" Poor feeding Poor housing	Better chicks Culling Bal. ration Remodeled houses	Culling demonstrations and feeding demonstrations	Mrs. Frank Yancey	10 flocks culled 2 feeding demonstrations
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES--BOYS AND GIRLS	Poor interest of boys and girls in farm	Junior Clubs	Heifer club	L. V. McLean	5 boys and girls
SCHOOL	Lack of coöperation with teacher	Coöperation with teacher	Visit school each month	T. D. Everett J. A. Schmidt J. N. Keeling	Visit by 3 men once each month

been changed so much in practice. Neither is it well organized as to form. Related items are not grouped together as they should be. Too many things are attempted. Permanency is apparently not given sufficient consideration. The program does appear to be fairly well balanced, although nothing is outstanding. It is a good plan to state the accomplishments of the year in juxtaposition with the plan or program of work at the beginning of the year.

### PROGRAM No. 2

#### AN ALABAMA COUNTY PROGRAM OF WORK WITH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

##### *Program Adopted for Year 1921*

Land terracing, 10 demonstrations.  
 Pastures, 10 demonstrations.  
 Crop and fertilized demonstrations, 10.  
 Pure-bred Sire Campaign, county wide.  
 Boys' Club work, county wide.  
 Marketing sweet potatoes.  
 Marketing syrup.  
 Marketing corn.  
 The home orchard, 10 demonstrations.  
 Coöperative buying and home-mixing fertilizers.  
 Construction sweet potato curing house, 1 demonstration.

##### *Program Accomplished in 1921*

- (1) Soil Improvement: Terracing demonstrations, 8.  
                                 Winter cover crop demonstrations, planted 30.
- (2) Crop Improvement: Corn demonstrations, 5, incomplete.  
                                 Cotton demonstrations, 10, incomplete.  
                                 Peanut demonstrations, 5, incomplete.  
                                 Sweet potato demonstrations, 24, incomplete.  
                                 Watermelon demonstrations, 30, incomplete.  
                                 Permanent pasture demonstrations, 5.  
                                 Home orchard demonstrations, 6.
- (3) Live Stock Improvement: Hog breeding demonstrations, 8.  
   Hog feeding demonstrations, 20  
   Hog cholera control demonstrations, 45.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| (4) Organization Activities: | Boys' agricultural activities, 3 demonstrations.<br>Coöperative marketing hogs, peanuts, sweet potatoes and watermelons.<br>Coöperative buying fertilizers, farm seed, etc.<br>Perfected organization of the County Farm Bureau.<br>Reorganized coöperative marketing at all principal marketing centers in county.<br>Organized Melon Growers' Association and Strawberry Growers' Association in county. |
|------------------------------|--|

*Program No. 3.* Here we have a program that is comprehensive, touches nearly all the important farming interests of the county and which should meet their needs. But it fails to emphasize any of its many items as more important than others, and so has no high points of interest. Nor is it definite in all its statements. Goals are not specified and leadership is not indicated. The program has, however, the elements of permanency in it. Good arrangement, as far as it goes, is made of the items so that the program is well organized. The membership work of the farm bureau is mixed up with the joint program with the college, which the county agent is expected to carry out, and these functions are not differentiated. Women's interests, except as they are in common with the men's, are provided for in a separate program.

### PROGRAM No. 3

## PROGRAM OF A NEW YORK FARM AND HOME BUREAU ASSOCIATION FOR 1922

### *Organization*

1. Conduct campaign for 1,000 members.
2. Secure active leaders and committeemen in every town and community.
3. Provide a joint Farm and Home Bureau meeting in every community.
4. Develop a permanent county board for Junior Extension work.

5. Coöperate with special farming interests for better programs and stronger organizations.
6. Join and support the American and State Federation of Farm Bureaus.

### *Livestock*

1. Continue coöperation with Dairymen's League.
2. Further develop Accredited Herd Plan of eradicating tuberculosis.
3. Coöperate with special Breeders' Clubs on Fair Exhibits, wool pool, and broader programs.
4. Conduct pure-bred sire campaign.
5. Organize a dairy improvement association.

### *Crop and Soil Improvement*

1. Conduct six oat variety demonstrations.
2. Conduct four potato improvement demonstrations.
3. Establish six pasture improvement demonstrations.
4. Continue drainage and lime work.
5. Seeds—develop local sources of good seed.

### *Poultry Improvement*

1. Hold 20 culling demonstrations.
2. Secure 10 new coöperators in poultry certification.
3. Coöperate with the Finger Lakes Poultry and Rabbit Fanciers' Association in developing a broader organization.

### *Marketing*

1. Coöperate with special interests on milk, wool, garden truck and other products.
2. Provide a better market reporting system.

### *Joint Projects, Men and Women*

1. School—(a) Disseminate findings of committee of 21 (Rural Education).  
(b) Continue school ground improvement.  
(c) Develop junior project work.
2. Fair-exhibits, milk bars, and promotion of special interests.
3. Recreation, picnics, community sings.
4. Publish Farm and Home Bureau News and develop better plans for publicity.

*Program No. 4.* This home bureau or women's work program is a very comprehensive well rounded one which not only states objectives but methods of accomplishment. Some of its items lack definiteness as to the particular goals for the year. Emphasis, in the sense of the relative time to



be devoted to the various items, is lacking. It has good possibilities for permanency of achievement and must be rated as a program which should meet the needs of the rural women of the county with a considerable degree of satisfaction.

#### PROGRAM No. 4

### A NEW YORK COUNTY HOME BUREAU PROGRAM FOR 1921

#### *I. Organization*

- A. Every community 100% Home Bureau as to knowledge of work.
- B. Every community 100% as to membership.
- C. Every community 100% as to organization and ideals of carrying out Home Bureau program.

#### *II. Health and Nutrition*

- A. Lecture course in coöperation with State Department of Health. Lectures will be given in all of the larger communities of the county once a month for six months. The lectures will be given in any community guaranteeing an attendance of 40 or more.
- B. School lunches. A school lunch in every school where it is practical (at least one hot dish).
- C. Community loan chests. A chest where sick room supplies are gathered together to be loaned out in times of great need.
- D. Weighing and measuring of school children once a month to see if their weights are keeping up to age and height.
- E. At least one health class in the county where under weight children are given instruction in the rules of health.

#### *III. Clothing*

Instruction course (given to local leaders at district meetings and they in turn will give instruction to women in communities. Each community will appoint a local leader to attend district conference in clothing).

Topics to be taken up include:

- a. dress form.
- b. one-piece pattern.
- c. alteration and adaptation of shirtwaist pattern.
- d. waists—cutting, fitting and finishing.
- e. skirt—pattern, alteration and adaptation.
- f. shirt—cutting, fitting and finishing.
- g. how to judge material.
- h. children's clothing.
- i. millinery.

*IV. Civics*

- A. Study course, using a prepared outline, supplemented by a traveling library from a state correspondence course, and a text-book.
- B. Debates, mock school meetings, etc.
- C. Civic Improvement work.
  - Clean-up weeks.
  - Rest rooms.
  - Parks, playgrounds, libraries, etc.

*V. Labor Saving*

- A. Buying of labor-saving equipment coöperatively.
- B. Development of labor saving and thrift in home.
  - Have at least one person in each community try out some labor saver or thrift idea, keeping accurate account for a period of time. Results to be reported in farm and home at winter meetings.
- C. Installing of labor-saving equipment in every home.

*VI. Recreation*

- A. Community choruses, dramatic clubs, etc. (Help may be secured from the State College in organizing these.)
- B. Recreational meetings conducted by local leader or agent—community sings, picnics, social evenings.
- C. Development of better school grounds.

*Program No. 5.* If details and all-inclusiveness of farmers' interests make a good program, this one from Iowa should satisfy most of the needs of the farmers of the county, except perhaps those of the home makers. Its chief fault would seem to be its generality of statement with its lack of specific provision of definite goals for the year, and that it is so large that it would be difficult if not impossible of achievement. This criticism is partially met, however, by the definite application of its parts to the various townships and communities of the county. As this illustrates the common method of applying a county-wide program to the community units this plan is shown for the following two townships:

## VILLAGE TOWNSHIP

1. Complete establishment of a successful alfalfa field.
2. Assist in wool marketing.

3. Conduct marketing in season.
4. Complete plans for club members and judging team.
5. Secure members in the bureau.
6. Assist in dairy marketing.

### CHEQUEST TOWNSHIP

1. Do poultry culling.
2. Secure means of limestone supply.
3. Complete "Dicky Dam at Cassidys."
4. Complete club work and exhibition.
5. Carry out fertilizer demonstrations started.
6. Assist in dairy marketing.
7. Increase membership.

Even the community programs are still indefinite, however. They do not show how much is to be done or who is to do it. Part of the program belongs to the agent and part of it to the organization alone. In general the program is well balanced and has the earmarks of having been planned with a view to permanency. Its details were not thought clear through.

### PROGRAM No. 5

#### OUTLINE PROGRAM OF WORK OF AN IOWA COUNTY, 1921

- (a) Farm Bureau Development.
  1. Organization of woman's division.
  2. Increasing of membership.
- (b) Soil Improvement.
  1. Soil terracing.
  2. Soil liming.
  3. Testing and using of phosphates..
- (c) Crop Production.
  1. Seeding alfalfa demonstrations.
  2. Introducing better varieties of grains.
  3. Orchardring and small fruit growing.
    - (a) Summer spraying.
    - (b) Starting more small fruit and truck.

## (d) Livestock Production.

1. Improving grade of farm flocks.
2. Planning and holding exhibitions.
3. Dairy testing and records.
4. Poultry records.

## (e) Farm Economics.

1. Assistance in keeping a set of farm accounts (farm accounting schools).

## (f) Marketing (buying and selling).

1. Organization of one strong marketing association.
2. Personal assistance in marketing seed.
3. Market reports for farmers.

## (g) Farm Home Betterment.

1. Through a well-organized woman's division.
2. Landscape and home beautification.
3. A cheap and effective paint for old buildings.

## (h) Boys' and Girls' Clubs.

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Pure-bred gilt club. | 4. Baby beef club.       |
| 2. Spraying club.       | 5. Girls' sewing clubs.  |
| 3. Judging club.        | 6. Girls' canning clubs. |

## (i) Other Project Activities.

1. Beekeeping.

(a) A demonstration apiary in every township.

*Programs Nos. 6 and 7.* These suggest a plan of program making somewhat different from preceding ones. In Maine, as in a number of other States, complete standard plans of work are drawn up by the State college extension specialists or departments, designed to help in solving practically all the types of problems which might exist in the State. These are carefully written up with the methods of procedure as well as the objects in view and are furnished to county agents in printed or mimeographed form. Following the preparation of standard plans of work, conferences of State and county agents are held to make clear each project, its object and method of procedure. After this conference the county agents meet each local committee to make a community analysis following a similar plan as recommended by the Washington office. With

this analysis of local problems as a guide, the State projects capable of helping to solve these problems are selected by the local committee and become a part of the community program. A sample of one of these college-made programs which are used as guides to county agents and local committees and which often become the local programs themselves follows:

*Type of College Projects from which Counties and Communities  
Make Selection in Maine.*

### SHEEP PROJECT

Campaign to Encourage the Use of Pure-bred Sires.

*Purpose:*

To increase the quality of stock kept.

*Method of Procedure:*

Wherever possible groups of sheep owners will be induced to coöperatively purchase a pure-bred ram.

- a. The Sheep Specialist will assist in organizing the group and instructing them in the proper use of the animal purchased.

Assistance will be given in securing good sires and high-grade stock.

*Results:*

The results of this line of work will be measured by—

1. The number of groups organized.
2. The number of pure-bred animals purchased.

Community and county programs are then made up of these college projects as indicated in programs 6 and 7. They have the merit of completeness and exactness of statement and usually mean that much consideration has

been given to finding the best means of doing a particular job. They are really projects or plans for meeting local needs which are not expressed but rather implied in the programs given as examples of this type. Such complete suggestions so fully worked out are likely to discourage local initiative and therefore fail of an important purpose unless they are very carefully presented. One of the chief values of local program making, rightly conducted, is that it stimulates thought upon important local problems and encourages local planning to solve them.

## PROGRAMS NOS. 6 AND 7

## PLANS OF WORK FOR 1922 IN TWO MAINE COUNTIES

*Franklin*

- A. Accounts Project.
  - 1. Dairy accounts.
  - 2. Farm accounts.
- B. Club Project.
  - 1. Boys' and girls'.
- C. Crop Project.
  - 1. Lime dems.
  - 2. Imp. potato seed plots.
  - 3. Manure supplement dems.
- D. Dairy Project.
  - 1. Better sires—B.S.
  - 2. Com. milk test circles.
  - 3. Silage crop test (sun-flower).
- E. Orchard Project.
  - 1. Fertilization dems.
  - 2. Spray and dust rings.
- F. Poultry Project.
  - 1. Culling campaign.

*Kennebec*

- A. Accounts Project.
  - 1. Farm accounts.
  - 2. Sweet corn accounts.
- B. Club Project.
  - 1. Boys' and girls'.
- C. Crop Project.
  - 1. Certified oat campaign.
  - 2. Lime dems.
  - 3. Manure supplement dems.
  - 4. Potato seed plots.
  - 5. Seed selection dems.
- D. Dairy Project.
  - 1. Accredited herd work.
  - 2. Com. milk test circles.
  - 3. Silage corn campaign.
- E. Orchard Project.
  - 1. Pruning campaign.
  - 2. Grafting dems.
- F. Poultry Project.
  - 1. Chick raising dems.
  - 2. Culling campaign.

*Programs No. 8(a) (b) (c).* These programs represent another angle of program making, which has already been referred to and which it is often important to give consideration. While it is desirable in general that there should be one program in the county and in the community representing the joint planning of the local people and the county agent with the college forces behind him, yet it usually happens that there are some things which need to be done in almost every county which are not a proper function of the county agent and the public agencies and which the local people should do for themselves. Much of the actual organization work, all of the membership campaign effort and all of the actual business transactions of the farm bureau belong in this class and should be the business of the local people. Hence, the desirability of a separate program for the organization.

In California, for example, there may be three different programs—in theory at least—in the same county: (a) one of the farm bureau or community center; (b) another of the county agent; and a third (c) of the county farm bureau organization. This latter may or may not be a combination of the farm bureau center programs, although usually it will be. Practically the same elements of need are expressed in all these programs. Each agency, however, has a little different function in and facilities for their solution. Three such programs, each of which have some of the merits or faults already pointed out in connections with others, follow:

#### PROGRAM NO. 8 (a)

#### A COMMUNITY PROGRAM OF WORK—1921—IN CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY 28, 1921

##### *Cottonwood Center*

Grain Elevator—goal to build one 30,000-bushel grain elevator at Gustine.

Tree Planting—goal to plant at least 500 trees along roadsides and fences during the coming year.

New Varieties of Grain—goal to have at least two demonstration plots on Mariout Barley.

Community Hall—goal one community hall.

Buying Stove—goal to raise funds to purchase necessary stove for meeting place.

Cold Storage Plant—goal to build one community cold storage plant in that section.

Change of Mail Route—goal to do away with Ingomar Post Office and get mail route out of Gustine.

Rodent Control—goal to clean up squirrels in that community.

Cow Testing—goal to have 500 cows under test in that community.

Fire Protection—goal to maintain 4 rural fire companies.

Irrigation—goal to organize the West Joaquin Irrigation district in conjunction with Dos Palos Farm Center of 208,000 acres.

Farm Home Department.

#### PROGRAM No. 8 (b)

#### A CALIFORNIA COUNTY AGENT PROGRAM OF WORK, DECEMBER 20 TO MARCH 31, 1921

##### *Contra Costa County*

1. Squirrel control.
2. Deciduous pruning.
3. Fruit evaporators.
4. Grain improvement.
5. Coöperative cream marketing.
6. Rural fire control.
7. Pest control.

#### PROGRAM No. 8 (c)

#### A COUNTY FARM BUREAU PROGRAM OF WORK IN CALIFORNIA

##### *County Program of Work.*

##### *Legislative*

Passage "Foreign Egg Law"—"Support Agricultural Extension" and other legislation affecting agriculture.

##### *Agriculture in schools*

Introduce agricultural course in all County high schools in agricultural sections.

##### *Public utilities*

Collect fund from entire county for State committee.

##### *Squirrel control*

Complete control.



## USING A PROGRAM OF WORK

✓ “Plan your work and work your plan” is a motto worthy of more emulation than it receives. A well-made program of work for a county is almost half the battle for necessary improvement and without it the county agent is traveling an uncharted sea and likely to drift either aimlessly nowhere or upon the rocks of failure. But the other half of the battle is to work the plan—to use and apply the program.

The steps in carrying out an agricultural community program are four: (1) The community committee meeting, (2) the general community meeting, (3) action intended to secure the desired result, and (4) recording and applying the result. These steps involve planning, publicity, action and application.

The community committee meeting is necessary to discuss and to perfect the plan for carrying out the program locally, and to put a local group behind it. It should be useful in enlisting interest and coöperation. If the main lines of the program have been properly worked out originally with the people of the locality, this should be easy. What is most important at such a meeting is to fix the responsibility of each member of the committee for each thing to be done, e.g., arrange for meeting place, advertise the meeting, secure local coöperators, furnish necessary materials, check up the results, etc., and to fix upon the definite means by which the program is to be carried out, whether by meetings, demonstrations, special organization or what. Times and places for each step should also be arranged.

The second step is essentially publicity, or acquainting all the people of the locality with the details of the plan for carrying out the program which they have previously

determined upon. This means first a general meeting or preferably a series of meetings to discuss these plans and to fully inform every farmer of what it is necessary for him to do to make the plan effective so far as he is concerned. This should be preceded and followed by articles in the local paper announcing the meeting and its purposes and describing what was agreed to there or the results. This will help to make known the details of the program plans to those not present at the meeting and review it for those who were.

It is essential that every one concerned fully understand the plans if they are to benefit from them. A specialist may be present at one or all of these meetings to discuss technical points and to teach methods, as for example, a dairy specialist to discuss and help along a clean milk campaign; perhaps by showing the nature, cause and effect of bacteria in milk and how they may be reduced to a minimum.

The third and most important step in using a program is getting action on the plan. The first and second steps may be well taken, but unless they are matured in the third and fourth most of their value may be wasted. Action may take many forms. If the proposal is made as a recommendation in a lecture or demonstration, such as soil improvement by the use of lime, or increasing winter egg yield by the better balancing of rations and use of lights, action must consist in the reaction produced in the convinced listeners and the result will be in the form of individuals doing the thing advocated on their own farms. If the plan proposed calls for the organization of the group as, for example, in a local fruit packing house for the grading, packing and branding of fruit, then the immediate result will be measured by the number and quality of the

persons agreeing to join and support the proposed association.

Some reactions or results can be measured definitely and some can hardly be measured at all. But the fourth step of recording and using the result to multiply the value of the program is important in carrying out the plan fully. Results may be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively, in terms of activity (numbers present and influenced, etc.), or in terms of reactions or actual accomplishment in terms of practices changed. Measurements of activity are much easier to secure but of less value than records of things actually done as a result of the program. It is less useful to know how many persons attend a pruning demonstration than to know how many persons changed their practices with good results because of it. But measurements of activity are necessary. Records of yields secured by better methods as compared with old or present methods and yields may be used to great advantage in multiplying results.

A system of record-keeping designed so as to measure accurately both activity and accomplishment as a result of this activity, so far as this is possible, is an indispensable part of every county agent's equipment. He needs such measurements for his own guidance and for the justification of his work. Local executive committees and membership, state and federal supervising officers, need them to study and compare results and to keep the public, the legislatures and the Congress informed.

There is no one best record system. Any plan that gives the necessary data with a minimum of effort should be satisfactory. A daily entry in some form is a necessary basis for monthly and annual summaries. State supervisors' offices usually have well worked out systems which they require of their respective agents.

There is a wide difference in the application and use of the programs of work in different communities. In some communities the program functions quite fully; in others it fails altogether. This is usually due to local leadership or the lack of it more than to any other one factor. How the program is made, its adaptation to a given community and the work of the county agent also have much to do with it. A study of the actual functioning of a county program of work in the home community of the writer shows fairly good application and results, though it leaves much yet to be accomplished. Few community programs function even to fifty per cent of their possibilities. This community is engaged in general farming with fruit as a strong specialty. It is quite progressive and prosperous. The following comprised the activities of the community committee and the county agent in 1921:

#### *Farm Bureau Organization*

103 members (406 farms).

17 committeemen, 12 active.

1 community committee meeting.

Many individual conferences.

3 general community meetings, attendances 145.

#### *Fruit*

1 general fruit meeting, attendance 12.

1 pruning demonstration, attendance 8.

1 pear psylla control demonstration, attendance 45.

3 packing house meetings, attendance 49.

1 coöperative packing house association, organized with 15 members marketing 25,000 bushels of fruit.

21 members furnished special spray service.

111 farm visits made.

#### *Soils and Crops*

1 corn variety demonstration.

1 potato spraying demonstration.

- 9 visits to these demonstrations.
- 6 farm drainage systems laid out.
- 15 farm visits made.

In addition to this work, a home bureau program of similar extent was carried out by the women.

Contrast the above activity, inadequate though it is, with that in another community in the same county:

#### *Farm Bureau Organization*

- 1 member (150 farms).
- 3 committeemen, one active.
- 3 visits to committeemen.

#### *Fruit*

- 1 pruning demonstration, attendance 2.

#### *Soils and Crops*

- 16 visits made.

Drainage work on two farms for which 8 visits were made.

These two instances give a fairly true picture of the functioning of community programs of work. Some are better. Many are worse. Most lie between the two ranges.

To bring together all the steps in constructing, organizing and using a program of work, we may summarize them as follows:

1. Discussion of problems at general community meeting at which suggestions are received and referred to community committee.
2. Nomination of community committeemen by school districts or other units, and election by the meeting.
3. Meeting of elected community committee and selection of

chairman. Complete discussion by committee of problems referred to it by community meeting and other matters, adoption of a definite program and the selection of a responsible leader for each proposed line of action.

4. Meeting of community committeemen of each project group from all parts of the county in a county-wide project meeting, usually with a specialist from the college to formulate suggestions for a county program based on community needs.

5. Meeting of county advisory council composed of all community committeemen to hear suggestions of project committees and to formulate a complete county-wide program to be recommended to farm bureau executive committee.

6. Executive committee passes on program with reference to its general desirability, adequacy and the ability to carry it out, and officially adopts the program in whole or in part.

7. The county agent holds conferences with local community committees or individual project leaders to make detailed plans for carrying out the program in each community.

8. The county agent holds conferences with college specialists to get technical help and advice and to plan for needed assistance in carrying out program.

9. Finally the holding of meetings and demonstrations, or the actual organization of local forces to apply the program and to accomplish the desired results.

It is not necessary that all these steps be followed in detail in every case. Some of them may be combined or approximated. But it should be remembered that the self-help process which the whole plan typifies is itself important in reaching the desired end.

#### STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS

State programs of work are usually very much better formulated and more carefully planned as to details than are local programs. They are worked out by specialists

who make this their business and who are constantly alert to improvements. Moreover, the Land Grant Colleges are required under the Smith-Lever Act to plan their work carefully in advance and in detail by college and federal officers. Unfortunately, these programs can be of no value except as they are applied locally. In other words, they largely depend for their application upon incorporation into local programs. The same is true of federal programs of work. Both state and federal programs must clear to the individual through the efforts of the local people and their application is limited thereby.

The state and national farm bureau programs are usually distinct in character from the Department, college and local programs, and the county agent has nothing to do with them unless it be to help give local publicity. In many states the county farm bureaus have programs different from the programs of work which the county agent carries on with their coöperation. State and national programs are to an extent a summary or compilation of these local programs. However, as a rule the programs of the state and national federations are separately worked out, financed and executed and without the assistance of the county agent. There is much room for better coordination and correlation of parts of these programs with those of the county agent and specialists by means of state committees to meet such needs as standardization and quality production.

#### GENERAL VALUES

Program making in the counties has a general value which in itself almost justifies the effort to formulate a program. Nothing else has contributed so much to the clarification of purposes and ideals and to the definition

of objectives of county agent work. Purposes which are vague and general become real and specific when well stated in a good program of work. The intangible objective is put into concrete form and reduced to a workable and practical means of accomplishment. General purposes that seem difficult of achievement appear easier when analyzed into their parts and specific annual goals set. In short, the whole problem is analyzed, simplified and defined.

So also the process of program making has great value in stimulating systematic and thoughtful consideration of problems, which in itself is usually productive of good results. Working together to analyze problems and to formulate programs for their solution develops men and women as well as methods. It stimulates and trains leadership. It opens up new avenues of thought and usefulness. So that the general values which result from building a local program of work may be almost as useful and worthwhile as the details of the program itself.



## CHAPTER II

### TEACHING AND INFORMATION GIVING

THE county agent of to-day is expected to do many things that were not originally included in the program that was laid out for him by Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture.

In Chapter IX it is pointed out how many and how varied were the conceptions of what he should do, and yet how different the emphasis has become from most of these. The county agent is now compelled by force of the circumstances in which he works to devote a large share of his energies to agricultural leadership and to the organization of farmers, because these are demanded of him alike by farmers and by the public institutions which stand as sponsor for him. But the early conception of his function as that of a teacher of better farming practice and better marketing methods still remains a fundamental one, and teaching is and should continue to be his major function.

That teaching, especially by the demonstration method, was considered the principal function of the county agent from the earliest period of the work in the South by Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, its founder, is clear from the most casual reading of his speeches about the work.<sup>1</sup> In these the words "teaching" and "demonstration" are very frequently used. Doctor Knapp was first of all a believer in teaching by demonstration. He has summed up his own point of view in a few words:

<sup>1</sup> "The Demonstration Work" by O. B. Martin, The Stratford Co., Boston.

"There is only one effective way to reach and influence the farming classes, and that is by object lessons."

"Can agricultural conditions be changed simply by talking? No! By demonstration? Yes!"

#### MR. LEVER'S CONCEPTION

In the Smith-Lever Extension Act of 1914, on which the county agent movement is based, the intent of the legislation is defined in the very general terms of "the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations" and "imparting information through demonstrations, publications and otherwise." But this is sufficient to make clear that the chief methods by which it was expected to promote a better agriculture were teaching and the giving of useful information. The Honorable A. F. Lever, Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, in reporting the bill to the House made this still clearer. He said:

"The theory of this bill is to extend this system of itinerant teaching, the state always to measure the relative importance of the different ideas of activities to be pursued and to determine upon the most important, to the entire country by at least one trained demonstrator or itinerant teacher for each agricultural county, who in the very nature of things must give leadership and direction along the line of rural activities, social, economic and financial. This teacher or agent will become the agent or instrumentality, through which the colleges, stations and the Department of Agriculture will speak to those for whom they were organized to serve with the respect due all lines of work engaged in by them."

On another occasion Mr. Lever said:

"The fundamental idea of the system of demonstration or itinerant teaching, presupposes the personal contact of the teacher

with the person taught, the participation of the pupil in the actual demonstration of the lesson being taught, and the success of the method proposed. It is a system which frees the pupil from the slavishness of text-books, which makes the field, the garden, the orchard and even the parlor and kitchen classrooms. It teaches us to 'learn to do by doing.' As President Wilson said, 'It constitutes the kind of work which it seems to me is the only kind that generates real education; that is to say, the demonstration process and the personal touch with the man who does the demonstrating.'"

Farmers and county agents who have come to have familiarity with the great work being carried on under this Act, will appreciate both the wisdom of Mr. Lever's conception and the accuracy of his vision into the future. They will be reminded of how they together selected seed corn and pruned apple trees and of how the women taught themselves the principles of dress-making in the parlor and of canning in the kitchen.

#### WHAT DO FARMERS EXPECT?

To teach and to give information to persons "in the localities where they reside" was evidently what Congress had in mind as the work of the county agent. Since the states were expected to largely determine their own programs of work chiefly through the colleges of agriculture it will be seen that the point of view of these institutions is of great importance.

But the colleges, primarily teaching institutions themselves, clearly look upon extension work as teaching and information giving. Evidence of this is found in the fact that this work is generally denominated among them as "extension teaching." Moreover, as has already been pointed out in Chapter I on programs, just as under the

Smith-Lever Act the federal government leaves it to the states to determine the character of the program to be carried on, so the colleges for the most part are leaving the definite and detailed programs in the counties to the local people in each county to formulate according to their needs, subject of course to college approval before they may expect college participation in carrying out these programs.

It is clear that the actual teaching program of each county is in the hands of the farmers themselves to determine. What then do farmers expect of the county agent?

This question is a difficult one to answer, because too little definite evidence is available. From known expressed opinions of farmers, but chiefly from the county programs of work made by farmers themselves, it would appear that they expect leadership in educational affairs and in the organization of the farming industry for greater efficiency in production and distribution of farm products, together with the provision of a county headquarters to function as a clearing house for reliable agricultural facts and information. Farmers do not of course express their needs in just this language, but this is the essential significance of the county programs. The answers to nearly all the questions raised by farmers in these programs is such useful and practical education and information so applied as to result in sound and wise action. When correct teaching, especially that effectively driven home by a good demonstration which makes the answer clear, is not put into practice by those who see and hear it, then the responsibility is clearly not that of the county agent or of the agencies which support him.

There is always a group of farmers, as of other classes of people, who think that they do not need more education. They say truly that they already know more than

they can practice. This feeling may itself indicate a need of stimulation and encouragement to practice. These are the persons also who say, "We have had enough of education now. It has made us poor through over-production. What we need is not education but a better market and price for what we already produce." Such statements are their own best answer and need no other. What they probably mean is that there has been too little educational effort put upon the problems of marketing and distribution in proportion to that expended in the effort to improve the methods of production by demonstrational teaching. What is evidently needed to meet such needs is more rather than less education but redirected to meet these vital problems. The educational method can and should be applied to the economic problems of distribution as well as to the problems of production.

But it is not necessary to say more on this point, for it must be evident to all that what farmers primarily want from the county agent is authoritative teaching and sound information. The quality of this teaching and information is very important. But methods are of equal importance because the method which is used often determines the acceptability and the application of the teaching and therefore its real influence. The question then becomes one of methods of teaching and information giving in this field of agricultural extension. Many methods are used.

#### HOW SHALL THE COUNTY AGENT TEACH?

What are the most effective means of extension teaching? Undoubtedly there is no one most effective method for all conditions. Nor can any single method be used under all circumstances. Neither are all equally effective with the same people or the same kinds of things to be

taught. Some subjects lend themselves better to one means of teaching than to others.

Three general methods or means of teaching are open to county agents to use: (1) The demonstration method or teaching to do by showing or by doing, (2) the lecture method, by means of the spoken word, and (3) the reading method, through publications, letters or some other form of the written word. Taken singly these are probably mentioned in the order of their importance and effectiveness. But each supplements the other and all should be and usually are used together. The most successful teacher makes one aid the other in bringing home the message.

#### TEACHING BY SHOWING AND BY DOING

This is peculiarly an age when people are demanding the proof of what is advocated. Farmers in particular want to see evidence that the thing taught will be successful and produce desirable results in practice. More and more is proof asked for. This desire is in part an outgrowth of the necessity of applying and localizing teaching. Especially does the county agent more than most teachers have to live with the results of his teachings. They determine his own future and that of his work. This desire for proof is also in line with the modern increase in the use of the eye as a supplement to the ear. Reading habits have to a considerable degree given way to "movie" habits. The tendency is a part of the general idea that "seeing is believing."

Although the demonstration method of teaching may be the most convincing it has its limitations. It is often the most expensive and therefore not always the most practicable. Nor is it always applicable to the problem in hand.

The demonstration method requires material and equipment. Sometimes this means land, seed, fertilizers, tools and time, as in the case of most crop demonstrations. In other cases living animals are needed, and they cannot always be brought in to the audience in the local meeting place, or the audience taken to the animals. In still other instances, as in the demonstration of the use of mechanical equipment for labor saving or for increased convenience or efficiency, e.g., power ditching machinery, water supply equipment, home conveniences, etc., it is often impracticable to provide or use the necessary material and equipment. Such demonstration material is expensive, heavy, and hard to handle and cannot be made available except under favorable circumstances. Moreover, the demonstration itself must be practicable and applicable under the local condition or it loses much of its force. Above all it must not cost too much or involve the use of things not readily obtainable.

The demonstration farm has usually failed chiefly for this reason. The farmer rightly points out that its results are not applicable because usually obtained under the abnormal conditions of abundant resources without the necessity of counting the cost. The backing either of a wealthy individual or corporation or of the state takes away the force of the evidence, and usually fails to enlist local coöperation. In other words, such farms usually fail to demonstrate. The farm demonstration, on the other hand, is a trial of the thing advocated under the normal conditions on the farm of any reasonably good farmer who has to make his living therefrom. Providing that it is attempting to prove a sound premise, it is more likely to be credited. The actual final result may be no better but it naturally has more weight.

## DEMONSTRATION VERSUS EXPERIMENT

The word *demonstration* is often confused with the word "experiment." There is a clear distinction here which is important. An experiment is "an effort to learn the truth" and the term implies at least that the truth is not fully known. A demonstration is a "pointing out with proof" and assumes that the truth is known. When a subject is yet in the experimental stage it is not ready for demonstration. Unfortunately, this is too much the case with many of our marketing problems at the present time. More research work must be done and more truth learned about marketing before solutions to some phases of the problem at least can be demonstrated.

There is a type of work which lies in the borderland between the experimental and the demonstrable. It is the application of a well-known principle or general fact to a specific locality or problem and involves a certain amount of trial to learn whether the principle is applicable or adaptable to the local condition. Such a trial, which may be both an experiment and a demonstration, or neither one, is sometimes called a test. Such a test might be the application of lime or acid phosphate to the soil in a region where the land was known to be usually deficient in these ingredients and their absence generally a limiting factor. The question of whether or not it will pay to make the application, and if so in what amounts, may also be involved. These are not academic distinctions as they may seem to some, but real differences whose clear recognition will aid sound thinking and wise practice.

Loose use of the term *demonstration* to mean almost any talk or lecture where illustrative material is used should be discouraged. Emphasis should be placed upon the fact



that a true demonstration calls for proof and not merely illustration.

The material which is demonstrable and therefore ready for the county agents' use may be drawn from several sources: (1) What the federal Department of Agriculture may have learned through its research work, (2) what the state experiment stations know to be the truth, (3) what the best farmers have proved by their own successful experience to be good practice in their own localities, and (4) facts which county agents and specialists may themselves gather by survey or other means in their travels and visitations among farmers throughout their counties or states. The experience of farmers often gathered by definite surveys may be quite as important as the results of scientific research. The chief difficulty in the use of the experience of farmers usually lies in its lack of definiteness or exactness of statement and in the absence of the proof of its truth.

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD DEMONSTRATION

A good demonstration from the point of view of extension workers in agriculture is characterized by several important qualifications. It should (1) be well chosen as to need and importance, (2) be applicable to the needs of the community, (3) be convincing, and (4) reach as many people as possible. An example of such a demonstration is the growing of a good field of alfalfa in a dairy region where little is grown and where much concentrated feed is bought. It should be located on a main highway and be plainly marked so as to show how it was obtained and at what cost. It would probably be desirable also to hold a "demonstration meeting" of the farmers of the neighborhood on the field at or just before cutting time, when

measured areas could be cut, weighed and compared with other treatments or other forage.

Many other factors will enter into such a demonstration also. The field chosen for the demonstration should be fairly representative of the conditions on the majority of the farms in the community. The farm operator must be in good standing and he should be influential in his own neighborhood. Other factors, such as seed, rainfall, natural fertility, etc., should be known, taken into consideration and explained. Further, in order to get the most possible out of the demonstration meeting, careful preparation should have been made for it by notices in the local papers, and by carefully choosing and advertising the time. Credit should be given the coöperator who did the work, and usually he should himself explain how the good crop was grown. Still other factors are important.

It will be found very effective in demonstrating so as to convince, to have the persons present actually take part in the demonstration, doing the thing being taught whenever possible and on the spot. Such lines of work as poultry selection or flock culling, where those present can handle the birds and feel and see the points brought out by the demonstrator, pruning fruit trees where each may try his hand and give his reasons for what he does, are peculiarly effective. In home demonstrations, such as cooking, canning and sewing, this method is particularly applicable, because one can actually learn to do by doing and may clearly see the relation of the principle to the practice.

#### MARKETING DEMONSTRATIONS

The demonstration method may be applied to problems of marketing when the solution is known, as well as to questions of production. But it is much more difficult to



A good demonstration points out a truth and offers proof wherever this is possible, as well as illustration of how the truth may be applied. This demonstration of how gophers were destroyed with poison in Lewis and Clarke County, Montana, does both. The group of neighbors who have suffered losses from this pest suggests that the demonstration is timely and meets a real need.



apply. More is usually at stake. All the conditions or factors influencing the problem cannot be isolated or controlled. The time required to complete the demonstration may extend over long periods and the demonstration must be cöoperative, involving many instead of a single individual. Failure is therefore a more serious matter than with a single crop demonstration.

But the greatest handicap of all to marketing demonstrations is that there is so little of well-established fact in marketing that is ready to demonstrate. Much of our marketing experience is still in the experimental stage. Indeed, this is wholly a limiting factor.

To show how successfully to organize a packing or shipping association at a point where it is needed, to bring about proper grading and packing, to help to set up sound systems of accounting, is to conduct valuable demonstrations, always providing that one has the facts and that the basic principles underlying a good demonstration outlined above, are observed. The real difficulty in this field lies in getting the facts and experience which are wholly reliable to demonstrate. This need is very real and very great. (See Chapter III.)

#### THE EXHIBIT

The exhibit is often a very useful form of demonstration, though usually a less convincing one because it is static. Its value depends almost entirely on its purpose and then upon how effectively this is brought out. If it is set up so as to bring out definite points or to teach definite lessons, and if the material is attractively arranged with as much of live interest in it as possible, it may teach very effectively. Exhibits may usually be evaluated on these four points: (1) representativeness or effectiveness with

which the thing to be taught is shown, (2) quality of the material exhibited, (3) attractiveness of the arrangement, and (4) educational values, such as labels, signs and information which help to bring out and emphasize the points which it is desired to teach.

The exhibit is most frequently used by county agents at community and county fairs. Here it affords an excellent opportunity to bring together the results of the season's demonstration work in the community or the county, such as potato selection, growth of legumes by the use of lime, canning and sewing, or young animals raised by the boys and girls. It may also be used to advantage to call attention to the strong and the weak points in the local farming, such as high quality fruit for which there may be a good local market, or the serious effects of uncontrolled insect pests and diseases. The more local material is used and the more people participating in the making of the exhibit, the greater the spread of its influence on the people of the community is likely to be.

The competitive exhibit especially for the locality, but also to a less degree for the county and the larger units, affords a good means of demonstrating the value of quality and encouraging high standards, if properly conducted. Every farmer who grows good crops or animals in which he takes pride, should, and many do, want to show these at the local fair. But the exhibit must be really competitive, the standards suitable for the article and the locality and the judging intelligent, if the largest value is to be had from it. If in connection with the judging of such exhibits, the reasons for the placings can be pointed out to exhibitors and visitors, this form of demonstration will be found still more useful.

The revision of the premium lists of local fairs may be a most useful form of demonstration by county agents.

These lists are often very bad, encouraging a too wide range of ill-adapted products and animals, without sufficient emphasis on the best and inviting the professional exhibitor. Here is often a splendid opportunity to improve the husbandry of the county by encouraging the fair management to offer large prizes for those varieties of crops and those types of animals best suited to the locality and in line with the county program of work, and by eliminating the poorly adapted kinds.

#### SPECIAL TYPES OF DEMONSTRATION

The modern emphasis upon demonstrations has developed many new forms, some very efficient and others merely novel kinds of propaganda. The barn meeting where animals are judged and handled, the gas engine school where the engines are overhauled and repaired, are good examples of efficient types of demonstrations, as both farmers and county agents will testify. Another special type which though expensive has proved very useful is the motor truck equipped with the necessary demonstration material, e.g., for a water supply installation. Such a truck permits the carrying of heavy equipment speedily from place to place, makes it possible to reach places away from the railroad and in the open country. It is of course limited to the time of the year when roads are good and preferably when outdoor meetings can be held.

Another useful and modified form of field demonstration is the automobile farm tour. In this form of meeting the persons attending drive from farm to farm, observing the results of farm demonstrations or especially successful practices which are pointed out and explained by the county agent or some of his coöperators. These are popular and if well-organized and conducted they constitute

good teaching methods. When definite points are not brought out or useful lessons taught, or when the principal object seems to be to cover a lot of territory and to see the country generally, this type of meeting may not be worth while.

The demonstration train, so-called, was once quite popular but of late has fallen into disuse if not into disrepute. As usually conducted it is essentially a propaganda method. It has the obvious advantages of novelty and being easily advertised so as to draw comparatively large crowds, and of permitting the easy transportation of good demonstration equipment and material. But the attendance is usually of mixed groups only casually interested and usually drawn chiefly from the villages where the train, of necessity, has to be stopped. Only a few at a time can be accommodated in the coaches and these few are often restless and are not likely to stay through the talk or the demonstration. In short, those attending are usually looking for the unusual or the sensational, and even if disappointed are not the persons whom it is most desirable to reach. The modification of the train idea by the use of one or two cars moved from station to station on regular trains and side-tracked for a half day or more at a time, is an improvement on the train, but still hardly as useful for good teaching as many other forms of demonstration.

#### TEACHING BY THE SPOKEN MESSAGE

Telling is not teaching; but the spoken word in lecture, particularly if discussion can be provoked, is a powerful force in giving useful information and in stimulating thought on local problems. It, as well as the demonstration, has the advantage of the personal touch and understanding between the teacher and the taught. After all,



this personal acquaintance between the county agent and the farmers of the county, gained through meetings and discussions, is one of the strongest influences towards better farm practices in the whole system. When the lecture or address is formal and impersonal it is of less value than when there is opportunity for discussion and the exchange of views. Unless the speaker is able to produce sooner or later definite reactions on the part of his audience through questioning or action he has largely failed.

There is of course, as every one has observed, a wide difference in the effectiveness with which different individuals deliver the spoken message. Every farmer knows that he gets much more from some speakers than from others. Why? It is practically impossible to lay down any set rules for giving a successful public address. One speaker succeeds by one method and another by an entirely different and perhaps even an opposite method. But poor public speaking is so common among county agents and farm bureau leaders—and indeed everywhere—and the usefulness of the speakers' message is so much reduced thereby, that it may be helpful to make a few suggestions—to try to answer the question of why one speaker makes his points when another fails utterly to do so.

#### WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPEAKER?

Perhaps the cardinal sin of public speaking is lack of preparation. Many county agents and farm bureau leaders have no doubt tried to address audiences without having a definite message to deliver. The attempt was to "give a talk" and they just "talked" without giving their audiences either information or useful advice or suggestions. Others know what they want to say but do not give thought enough as to how to say it so as to convince. The first

thing to do in trying to teach by the spoken word is to decide definitely what one wants to teach and then to prepare it so as to deliver it effectively.

Then one should study and come to know his audience and let it know him. Whether the audience is friendly, indifferent or actually unsympathetic to the speaker or his subject should make a great deal of difference in his method of presenting the subject. The nearer public speaking approaches the conversational method the better, if one authority is right who says that it is "dialogue in which the audience takes part." Certainly one should talk with his audience and not at it or over its head.

Studied forms of expression are not as important as straight honest thinking and real mastery of one's subject. This is why some persons with no experience as speakers but who have thought out a subject to a conscientious conclusion often make eloquent and convincing speeches. A good speaker will however vary his method with his audience and his purpose; if the need be to convince his hearers of certain facts, then he will use the argumentative method; if to "sell an idea" or to stimulate to action, then he will try persuasion; or he may purpose to teach principles, in which case the didactic method with illustrations will be the one which he will use.

Not the least among the qualifications of a good public speaker is the ability to state his message in a few words and to stop when he gets through. A speaker may give a good talk and make all his points, and then destroy its effect by not having good terminal facilities.

#### EXTENSION SCHOOLS

The extension school or short course is perhaps the most intensive and the most advanced teaching method used

by the county agent. It varies from two weeks to three days in length. College specialists as a rule do most of the teaching, two persons each giving two periods a day, sometimes with the help of the county agent.

The local community committeeman and the county agent are responsible for the organization and the local arrangements for the schools. Preferably, a definite enrolment sufficient to warrant the time and the expenses of the instructors, usually from thirty to forty persons, is required in advance. Regular attendance is expected and recorded by roll call. The best work can be done in such schools only when those registered attend regularly and study the lessons consecutively as they are given. In order to encourage regular attendance, it is usually considered to be good practice to charge a fee (usually from seventy-five cents to one dollar each on a basis of thirty to forty attendance). The locality should furnish the hall, heated and lighted, and in some cases illustrative or demonstration material.

Such a school offers an opportunity to study individual and community farm problems systematically and with more or less thoroughness. A variety of subjects may be taken up, but it is usually better not to try to handle more than two in the same school and these should be more or less related. Two subjects give the instructors a chance to alternate in lecturing and thus to rest. Soil improvement and crop production as applied to the soils and crops of a particular section go well together. Animal husbandry and forage crop production make a good pair. One general problem may be treated in two or more of its phases, as for example, marketing, or, this may be combined with farm management. A sample program combining problems of coöperative marketing and farm management follows:

*Wednesday, January 4*

9.30-10.00 A.M.	Roll-call. Organization of school.—County Agent.
10.00-11.00 A.M.	Why some farms pay better than others. —1st Instructor.
11.00-12.00 A.M.	The marketing system and the services it renders. —2nd Instructor.
1.00- 2.30 P.M.	How some farmers have organized a profitable farm business. —1st Instructor.
2.30- 4.00 P.M.	How the several marketing services are applied to the chief farm products of the State. —2nd Instructor.

*Thursday, January 5*

9.30-10.45 A.M.	Analysis of the coöperative corporation and the coöperative movement in the State. —1st Instructor.
10.45-12.00 A.M.	What accounts shall farmers keep? —2nd Instructor.
1.00- 2.30 P.M.	Problems in coöperative purchasing. —1st Instructor.
2.30- 4.00 P.M.	How to take an inventory and make out a credit statement.—2nd Instructor.

*Friday, January 6*

9.30-10.45 A.M.	Use of crop and market reports.—1st Instructor.
10.45-12.00 A.M.	Problems in coöperative selling.—2nd Instructor.
1.00- 2.30 P.M.	Prices of farm products and future prices. —1st Instructor.
2.30- 4.00 P.M.	The agricultural organizations of the State; what they have accomplished and what they have ahead of them. —2nd Instructor.

The lecturer usually uses from thirty to forty minutes to present his subject-matter material. The remainder of each period is used for discussion and answering questions.

The short course or extension school should be used as a very definite means of carrying forward a local program of work and not miscellaneously. It should fit a situation and meet a need and there should be much previous preparation for it. Interest in the problems to be studied should have been manifested or aroused by community

meetings or institutes and an evident desire to go deeper into local problems indicated. Unless there is such an intention and unless the spirit of coöperation in community affairs—of working together to solve common problems—is present, such a school will fail to produce the largest possible results. Its purposes and methods should be fully understood and appreciated by farmers beforehand, for only as it is “sold” to them by the county agent and his local committeemen on its merits, and wanted by them for its real value, can it serve the needs of the community. It is expensive in the time of the farmers who attend as well as of the instructors who teach. The most thorough advertising by personal explanation, by letter and through the local papers, is necessary for the best results. Such a short course is peculiarly the type of thing which if worth doing at all is worth doing very well.

#### COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND FARMERS’ INSTITUTES

The original and oldest form of agricultural extension is the farmers’ institute. Modern forms of extension, and especially the county agent work, owe much to it. It was in the farmers’ institutes that the early and hard battles for the recognition of the value of science as applied to farming were fought and won. In these meetings farm practice as represented by experience came to be correctly evaluated, the place and contribution of science recognized, and the two first utilized together. Here were first taught and appreciated many of the first principles of good farming; the need of maintaining soil fertility and how to do it; the composition and true value of feeds and fertilizers; spraying to control insects and diseases; home making as a profession; and scores of similar basic facts. County agents have to considerable extent harvested the

results of this pioneer work. They are applying and interpreting it into action.

This long and honorable history of the farmers' institutes should be utilized by county agents and committeemen in the modern institute or the community meeting, with such improvements as progress suggests. What the institutes stand for is well known among farmers; plain and useful facts presented by practical men and women; free and democratic discussion of local agricultural and home-making questions; and the teaching of the best farming and housekeeping and the highest ideals of country life. The county agent should seek to retain the democracy, the informality and the devotion to farm and home improvement of this old and tried institution in his own meetings. At the same time modern conditions and problems demand a better prepared lecturer, one trained as well as experienced, and a more complete definite and applied treatment of the subject—more teaching and less preaching.

The community meeting as most county agents know it, is the modern edition of the farmers' institute, sometimes called a farm and home institute. It should be an improvement over the old-time institute because it is part of a systematic plan of education extending throughout the year, with a closer tie to local problems and conditions through the demonstrations conducted in the locality, and the committeemen through whom it is organized locally. Another improvement is often effected through the presence of the local committeeman or the county agent on the program to discuss the farm bureau's work in that locality, thus tying the meeting and the necessarily more general talk of the outside speaker more closely to local problems.

The community meeting should have for its main pur-

poses the discussion of local problems which are a part of the local program of work, reporting on what has been done on these problems in the community during the previous year, the stimulation of local initiative and leadership and of vision and wise planning for the future. It should be planned by the local committee and be a part of its plan of activities. It will require careful preparation and good advertising to secure the value from it that is in it.

#### LANTERN SLIDES AND MOVING PICTURES

The use of lantern slides and moving pictures as supplementary means of teaching offers an opportunity to combine the showing or illustration of the things taught, which is an approximation of the demonstration, and of the spoken word method. Both these means involve carrying more or less expensive equipment unless the community is equipped for their use which is often not the case. Moving pictures of course involve more equipment and power facilities than do lantern slides.

Wherever conditions permit and the subject lends itself, lantern slides offer an effective form of illustration too little utilized by county agents. County agents should if possible be equipped with a portable lantern and slides showing their own work. For the discussion of technical subjects they can secure slides on a great variety of subjects from their state agricultural colleges, the United States Department of Agriculture and other sources.

The use of moving pictures in most teaching work is of doubtful value. The film moves too rapidly to enable the teacher to point out details and concrete facts. It rather gives impressions. It may be useful for educational propaganda. Film making is also expensive and highly technical. When supplemented by and used in connection with lan-

tern slides or a blackboard, and accompanied by lecture and explanation it may be very useful. A crowd can be more surely obtained and interest can be more easily maintained with the moving picture and this may be its chief value in extension teaching.

#### FARM VISITS

After all the great advantage of the spoken word as a means of extension, lies in the fact that it is personal, that it means a direct contact between man and man. The farm visit or the call of the county agent at a farm to discuss problems or to answer questions has this advantage with the added one of being on the ground where the problem exists. This phase of county agent work would be ideally cared for, if it could all be done by personal discussion with the farmer on his own farm. But experience shows that an agent is able to make only about five hundred farm visits in a year in the average county. As there are usually from three to five thousand farmers in a county one visit a year to one in six or eight of them will hardly suffice to meet the need. Moreover, such intensive personal work is expensive in both time and travel. Nor can it meet the need for group work, especially in the fields of organization and marketing.

#### OFFICE CALLS

The office call is in some respects even a better method of teaching than the farm visit, although it has the disadvantage of not being on the ground where the problem exists. It is a better measure of the farmer's real interest and need for help, because it is an indication of appreciation of the need and requires initiative on his part to



come to the county agent's office, as well as a convincing knowledge of where to go for what he wants. The farm visit may or may not mean a real need and initiative on the farmer's part. Again the office call is a cheaper means of teaching, since it consumes less of the county agent's time and travel. It often happens that several thousand farmers call at a county agent's office in the course of a year when it is so located in the county as to permit this, and the average number of calls is about one thousand. The county agent may also have at hand in his books, bulletins and records more ready means for the answering of many questions.

#### TEACHING THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD

The third possible method of teaching through the use of the written or printed word, though capable of the widest application because it employs the easiest method and the cheapest means, is perhaps the least effective. It has been said that we remember seven-eighths of what we do, three-eighths of what we see and only one-eighth of what we hear or read. Whether or not this is true, it is certain that the printed word alone does not always produce the desired reaction in men. It is, therefore, best used in connection with and as a supplement to the other methods.

In considering the usefulness of this means of teaching, it should be remembered that farmers are busy folks who work long hours at hard physical labor, and that they are not given to extensive reading unless it be at certain times of the year. Yet like other folks they will read what is interesting and what they consider is of vital concern to them; but it must not be too long nor impracticable. In addition to what any good citizen would naturally read, farmers usually want to get by reading useful facts and

principles about their business, agricultural news both local and general and special information of a timely character. The usual means of supplying these needs are bulletins, mostly supplied by the United States Department of Agriculture and the agricultural colleges and experiment stations, special local publications as farm bureau "Newses," "Exchanges" and bulletins, the local press, and correspondence including circular letters.

### BULLETINS

Bulletins are somewhat in disrepute nowadays on account of their reputation for being dry and uninteresting documents, and they are therefore being replaced more or less by the more interestingly and popularly written press articles. But it must not be forgotten that the bulletin has been one of the chief means of recording and distributing accurate and valuable records of agricultural truths acquired through years of painstaking experimental work. And it will probably continue to be so, even though it is a difficult task to prepare bulletins which will meet the wide variety of needs even in a single subject. There is also danger of misunderstanding what is written through lack of personal contact and the absence of necessary explanations. But after all it is not the form but the content of a publication that counts. If the bulletin contains valuable facts or needed information it will be read, although of course the more interestingly it is written the more likely it is to be read. In the last analysis one who wants definite or detailed information will want to have it in written or printed form. As supplying such information and for ready reference the bulletin is indispensable.

Both the agricultural colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture annually print and distribute

thousands of bulletins. In the past these have been distributed largely on lists, but of late distribution is being made to farmers and others only on request or through county agents who usually keep a supply on hand. Probably bulletins are best used in answer to specific requests or questions. They may also be used by county agents to good advantage in connection with the discussion of specific subjects of which they treat at community meetings. Sometimes they can be distributed to good advantage in connection with exhibits at fairs. Bulletins which have a bearing on a subject of concern or interest to farmers are always useful as references.

#### CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AND STUDY CLUBS

In a few of the states there have been organized what are commonly known as correspondence courses, which make systematic use of bulletins to teach given subjects. A number of these states prepare bulletins in simple and logical form specifically for use in such courses. These are supplemented by the use of other bulletins and sometimes by the use of text-books as references. The student is regularly enrolled, answers question papers after each lesson and has his papers corrected and his questions answered by a qualified instructor at the college. He cannot secure another lesson until he has satisfactorily completed the previous one. In most of the states, as, for example, in Pennsylvania and Ohio, a certificate or diploma is issued, and in a few states college credit is even given, upon the satisfactory completion of the course.

When such courses are used by communities in organized study clubs as in New York state, they are especially valuable as a method of teaching, reaching many persons and affecting the practices of whole communities. College or

university correspondence courses are probably most valuable when used as a definite part of the local machinery to help to work out definite parts of the local program of work, either through study clubs or individuals.

#### FARM BUREAU PUBLICATIONS

We shall discuss more fully in Chapter XI the use of farm bureau newses, exchanges and bulletins, as house organs or media for keeping the members informed of what the organization, county, state and national, is doing. From the standpoint of a means of teaching such a regular monthly publication may be useful in keeping the local programs of work and progress and results on them before the membership. Unless there is some such means of helping individuals to keep the work visualized, to encourage them to do their part, and to stimulate action and better efforts, progress in carrying out the program is likely to lag. Much can be accomplished in keeping up the spirit and the virility of the organization and its work by inspirational editorials setting forth ideals and goals.

Such publications also afford a valuable means for college specialists to put in concise and usable form the latest results of experiment and investigation, together with certain details, which are not usually put into bulletins quickly if at all. One of the greatest difficulties in connection with the preparation of these monthly publications by the county agent, however, is his usual failure to find the necessary time, with his many other duties, to do it well. So he does the easiest thing, namely, makes it up "with the shears," using too much of the ready prepared material of the specialist, with the result that his paper is usually prosy, general and dry reading and lacking in local news interest. To be most effective, facts should be presented in terms of

local conditions and experience and there must be plenty of personal reference or "local color." In other words, such a publication may not be a particularly useful means of teaching unless enough attention is given by the agent to the principles of good writing.

### THE LOCAL PRESS

No publication medium of the organization can take the place of the local press, daily and weekly, as a means of disseminating information. The local papers are probably read regularly by at least three-fourths of the local people. They are the sources of news of all kinds. They are published regularly and on time daily or weekly as the case may be, and their news is fresh and timely. They are the regularly established community publications and entitled to be the local sources of news so long as they function efficiently. Especially is the local country weekly newspaper a necessary community institution which deserves local support on this basis alone.

Agricultural information and news should be supplied by the county agent to the local editor as a service to his readers, rather than with the point of view that the local paper is simply a medium to help the county agent do his work, or a charitable institution. The publisher must make a living. To do so he must sell his paper to as many individuals as possible, and to sell his paper he must put in it the news and information which his subscribers want. This should include, if the county agent and the farm bureau are really functioning in the community, news of its plans, what it is doing from week to week and the results of its activities. The editor needs this kind of material to make a good paper and the county agent should furnish it to him for this reason as well as because it also serves his

own purpose to inform the local public of what he is doing.

If this phase of county agent work is to function fully—and it is important that it should—the county agent must give it the time necessary to prepare and send out regularly in time to reach the editor before each issue of his paper, the right kind of news in brief and readable form. This should include not only notices and plans for community and county meetings and other events to come, but summaries of what happened at the meetings, interesting results arising from changes in practices recommended by the agent in the community, local farm experiences gathered here and there, etc. This will be facilitated and the agent assisted in doing it, by the designation of some local committeemen or other farmers to report items of local interest to the editor. The city daily papers which circulate among farmers usually have their local community representatives, who, with a little coaching, can be depended upon to secure the necessary information for their own papers, especially if they are kept advised of meetings and notified of events of special interest to their readers. They and the local weekly editor should be invited to call at the office regularly for news, and there should always be something there for them.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Little need be said about this method of giving information. It is one of the most useful of all the methods available with the written word because it may be made very personal. Inquiries by letter should always be encouraged by the county agent, and answered fully and promptly. No good points can make up for delay in answering letters. Many county agents will have to plead guilty to the charge of being slow to reply to letters and in too many cases of

neglecting to reply at all. It is a relatively inexpensive, quick and satisfactory method when properly used.

The circular letter, though it is less satisfactory because it must necessarily be more general and therefore less personal, is widely used because it is an easy way to reach many people quickly. The free mailing or franking privilege encourages the use—and the abuse as well—of the circular letter, so much so, in fact, as to make this means of communication much less valuable than it might otherwise be. Many farmers receive so much franked material from Congressmen, as well as county agents, that in some cases they do not even open it. Then, too, it is easy to spoil a letter in the writing of it. A circular letter should be concise and brief, and make its points stand out clearly and definitely. Not often should it be more than one page in length.

Gathering information from farmers by questionnaires—a common practice—is useful and desirable only when (1) the information is necessary or very important, (2) the questions asked are few in number and simple in form, so that they can be answered easily and understandingly, and (3) the results are promptly made known to the persons who answer them as well as to those for whom they are gathered.

#### THE PLACE OF THE SPECIALIST

Good teaching whether with minors in a classroom or with adults in a field meeting has at least three essentials: (1) A thorough knowledge or mastery of the subject, (2) the right pedagogic organization of the teaching material or methods, and (3) the necessary force and personality to convey the message convincingly to the student. According to the educational psychologist, education is the production of changes in human beings; changes in knowledge,

in skill and in attitude. The ability to educate presupposes careful training and preparation of the teacher and individual attention to the job of teaching.

The county agent is essentially a teacher of better farming, as has already been pointed out. He is also an organizer of local effort for this purpose. But effective teaching requires knowledge which must be kept up to date, and which in this work must often be expert and technical. Good organization of teaching requires knowledge of method and experience elsewhere. There must be a constant source of supply of the latest information as to fact and method or else the teacher goes stale and the teaching becomes ineffective. The average county agent has not the time, even when the nature of his duties permits him to have the inclination, nor can he be expected to search out and study carefully all the facts and the methods in his field that he needs to know, and experience shows that he does not. There may be, of course, a few individual exceptions. The specialist is the necessary link between the county agent and the investigator. Without the specialist, the county agent would very likely soon cease to be a good teacher.

The specialist also furnishes a constant and necessary supply of written and printed material, kept up to date and used in the press of the county, as well as in state-wide and regional publications. The county agent has too little time for study, for accumulating data, or for putting what he has into teaching form. For this he properly must depend on the specialist. Experience everywhere shows that this is more and more the case. The specialist serves more and more as a clearing house to assemble the results and the experience of the various counties, to tabulate and to correlate them, and to make the whole available to all the counties.



The relation of the specialist to the county agent, then, is that of furnishing vital and a necessary source of supply for up-to-date teaching material and methods. He should also hold himself ready to be called upon to give expert and technical advice when needed, and actually to be available to teach in meetings and schools in the county. Unfortunately, there are too few specialists for this purpose.

#### RELATION OF COUNTY AGENT TEACHING TO TEACHING IN THE SCHOOLS

Since teaching is thought by some to be exclusively the function of the schools, the question arises as to what the relation of the county agent's teaching function is or should be to the schools.

These relations differ widely in the different states. Where the local high schools have not developed courses in agriculture and home making at all or fully as yet, the question of relationships is not usually felt to be important and these subjects are mainly left to the county agents to teach. Where these courses are well developed and the departments of agriculture and home making education in the schools are strong, the functions, obligations and responsibilities of the county agent and of the teaching of agriculture and home making in the schools, as defined by law, which will be found to overlap somewhat, are usually (1) the junior project work of the schools and the junior extension or boys' and girls' club work of the county agents or club leaders, and (2) the short, unit courses in agriculture and home economics in the public schools, and the extension schools conducted by college specialists at the request of the county agents.

In considering the problems which arise out of this situation when it exists it should be remembered that it is the

duty, the function and the responsibility of the public schools to provide education for all children, and to provide such adult education as is authorized by law. In the same way it is the function and the duty of the agricultural colleges under the law, to provide supplemental extension education for farmers and to enable them and the federal Department of Agriculture, through the county agents and specialists to bring their advances in knowledge to farmers and their families who can make the applications.

The problem of relationships has become more acute as the Smith-Hughes law begins to function in the localities. Recently a joint committee representing the agricultural colleges, and the vocational and rural education departments of the schools, has agreed upon a statement of fields and relationships, which as it is the best answer that can be given to the question as to what these relationships should be, is herewith quoted in part:

"There are three types of situation to be considered: (a) Where agricultural and home-economics education is fully developed by the local schools, (b) where such education has not yet been undertaken by the local schools, (c) where such education is in process of development by the local schools.

"(a) Where the school provides a comprehensive program of agricultural and home-economics education which meets the needs of children and adults, through systematic instruction and supervised practice, the extension forces of the land-grant colleges (including county agents) shall not duplicate such work of the schools, but shall rather coöperate with the schools by providing, on request, subject-matter, special lectures, conferences, and other similar services. This shall not be interpreted to limit the freedom of the extension forces to prosecute their extension work through local organizations of farmers.

"(b) Where the school does not provide such a program of instruction in agriculture and home economics, the extension service of the college should organize extension work. In such locali-

ties, the school should give its fullest support and coöperation to the extension workers.

“(c) It is recognized that, in some places, schools will be in the process of developing such educational programs. In these cases, the following principles should apply: Extension workers should confine their work with children to those whom the school does not enroll in systematic vocational or prevocational project work, including supervised home practice, unless requested or authorized by school authorities to enroll them. The school should organize its work with adults to provide systematic vocational instruction as defined herein. The school should offer its facilities to the junior extension worker wherever the school has not, in operation, vocational or prevocational project work accompanied by supervised home practice.

“Before undertaking junior extension work in any county, the extension division should submit in writing to the county superintendent of schools, the plans proposed for junior extension work in that county, and should endeavor to arrange for a basis of understanding and coöperation. Copies of plans, when agreed upon, should be filed with the state department of education for consideration, before being put into operation.”

## CHAPTER III

### ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

IN any discussion of the county agent as a rural leader and organizer, this fundamental premise should be recognized at the outset: Practically every community has within itself the inherent ability and leadership to discover and to bring about the solution of its own problems. Every county agent should approach problems of organization and leadership from this standpoint. Unless he does, he is likely to fail in what should be his largest objective, namely, the development of strong, self-reliant men and women and of good rural citizenship in the open country.

This is, of course, the first essential of a democracy. If the local units or community groups are not able to work out their own problems, then democracy fails at its roots. All permanent improvement lies within. It is only heaven that it is sometimes necessary to supply from without.

#### THE SELF-HELP PRINCIPLE

The way to most effectively help a man is to teach him to help himself. This self-help principle underlies all good organization and leadership. Self-help means doing things for one's self and thereby acquiring ability to solve one's own problems. Too much help from the outside or help of the wrong kind may mean lessened ability to deal with one's own problems. This is not only lack of progress; it is going backward.

If results in any community are entirely dependent

upon the county agent; if a community program cannot be carried through unless the county agent must always take the lead; if a community meeting cannot be successfully held unless the county agent is present; then one may well question whether or not progress is being made. The county agent's ideal should be to work himself out of a job, that is, to discover so much local ability and to develop it so fully that in time no outside help will be needed and that the community will be able to take care of its own problems.

Many of the qualities of leadership, or which make for leadership and organizing ability, may be dormant in individuals in the community. They may be both undiscovered by the potential leader himself and by his neighbors as well. This is true of many localities of which it is sometimes said "this community is dead; it has no local leadership." What is really meant is that no leadership is apparent; that nothing is being done; when, as a matter of fact, potential leadership is probably there but not functioning. Under such circumstances, the greatest contribution that can be made by outside agencies, like the county agent, is to supply the leaven in such a way as to help and encourage this leadership and organization. Once find the man, convince him that he can do what ought to be done, and help him to do it, and the problem is half solved.

Why are some communities progressive and others backward? Why does one community get the reputation of "doing things" and another that it is "dead"? Usually because of lack of leadership. The spirit of a community is its life. This spirit is dependent upon the individuals which make it up and more particularly upon its leadership. Broadly speaking, a community's will to do measures what it can do, within reasonable limits. An individual can do what he wants to do, if he wants to do it bad enough to

make the necessary sacrifices of other things. The same is true of a community, which is only a collection of individuals which "has come to act together in the common concerns of life."

#### THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP

There is a disturbing apparent lack of qualified farmer leadership in too many rural communities. This was one of the first things which most county agents discovered when they entered their counties. One of the county agent's greatest accomplishments is that he has found, encouraged and helped to develop many strong local leaders and brought about the solution of many local problems by communities themselves.

There are still too many rural communities without good leadership. Many needful things go undone. Many things that are accomplished are not done well enough. The finding and helping of leadership to function is still a considerable task and one to which the county agent may well devote much of his time and energy.

One of the reasons for this apparent lack of leadership is that in the great majority of cases the farmers' business is in itself too small to develop men of affairs. The gross income of the average farmer probably varies between \$1,000 and \$5,000; the income of the most successful farmers from \$10,000 to \$25,000, the \$50,000 and \$100,000 gross farm incomes being very exceptional. The average gross income, however, increased very rapidly up to the period of agricultural price collapse in 1920. A well-recognized tendency toward larger farming enterprises is a valuable contributing factor to the training of farmer leadership.

Farmers work hard physically. Less than one farmer in two usually has a hired man. He is closely confined to his

business. His inclination is to stay at home rather than to go abroad. His circumstances are against his acquiring broad outlooks.

The enlarged fields of contact which are coming to farmers through their organizations, whether they be general, social, educational or economic, are strong factors tending to correct the situation. The development of education is also an important factor. Every year sees more high school graduates in rural communities. The colleges and universities are contributing their quota of well-trained young men and women. These and other factors are helping to correct the lack of leadership.

Much future rural development awaits the discovery and the training of leadership. It is the great need of the hour in agriculture. Everything that can be done to promote such leadership should be done. Some of the leadership will be made available through self-discovery, some of it by its neighbors, but much of it can be stimulated and encouraged by the county agent.

#### PRESENT LEADERSHIP

It should by no means be inferred that rural communities are without leadership at the present time. Every community has some kind of leadership for each phase of its activities. It does not always have vigorous, well-trained leadership in agricultural affairs. There are a number of types of leadership which are worth considering.

One of the best types of local leaders is the successful farmer whose leadership is one of example. He secures the confidence of his neighbors through his actual accomplishments in farming; he is a source of good information and advice; he is looked to to take the lead in his community in doing things that affect local agriculture, which farmers

generally desire to have done. This is one of the strongest and most helpful kinds of local leadership in farmers' affairs.

The second and very common type of leadership is that acquired by the local banker, the local merchant, dealer or speculator who, because he controls more or less of the wealth of the community or because he is a large buyer or seller acquires an influence by this means which is often out of proportion to his real qualifications in other respects. This kind of leadership may be very helpful. If it is based on the character and personality of the individual and what he has accomplished for the community, it will be good. If it is based upon selfish attainments used for personal interests, as is too often the case, it will be harmful.

There are always special or occasional leaders who stand out both because of their personalities or more often because of the position which they may hold in the community. These are usually non-agricultural, such as the pastor, the social worker, and sometimes the politician. The value of such leadership altogether depends upon the motive and qualifications of the individual. Position does not of itself carry with it leadership. Too often such leaders are not sound and dependable in agricultural affairs and, therefore, not always desirable.

The leadership which comes to an individual because he is elected by his neighbors as an officer of a local grange or a local farmers' club, theoretically, is excellent. Officers in such organizations should be elected for their leadership qualifications and because the leadership of a particular individual is needed. In practice such leadership is not always effective because it is so often elected for personal, political or other reasons.

The community committeemen of the farm and home bureaus, especially the chairmen of the committees, should





The chief function of the farm and home bureau committeemen and committeewomen is to exercise leadership in their home communities in developing a practical and an effective local program of work and generally in getting desirable things done. This farm bureau president and his county agent are making plans together to secure the more complete functioning of their community committees.



exercise real leadership in their communities. As a rule they are elected and continued in their responsibility on the basis of qualification and performance. There is little formality used in choosing them as a rule and, therefore, little is necessary in order to replace them. The value of such leadership depends almost wholly upon the energy, virility, understanding and enthusiasm of the individual committeemen.

#### THE QUALIFICATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

L. H. Bailey has said that any leader chosen "should be to the agricultural interests what the teacher is to educational interests and the pastor is to religious interests." He gives four qualifications which he considers essential in good rural leadership.

The first of these is knowledge of a situation and clear conception of problems. Such knowledge is usually gained by close observation and study of the situation as it exists. Good technical training—particularly graduation from a first-class agricultural college—should contribute much to one's ability to make clear analyses of problems. Personal contact with residents of the locality, careful surveys to get at the real facts, the study of local literature, if there is any, and particularly an understanding of the farm practice and management experience and point of view of the people who live there, are essential. A clear conception of problems usually comes only with a careful observation, analytical study and time, together with contact with those who have it. "Knowledge is power."

Sympathy with a situation is no less important than knowledge of it. Probably in almost ninety per cent of the cases both are attained only by having been born and reared, or at least by having lived long on a farm. Usually

one must grow up and live for some time in a rural situation and among rural people to gain sympathy with and to completely understand their problems and points of view. A local leader must fully understand and respect even if he cannot fully accept the problems and points of view of those he would serve. Without such sympathy and understanding, leadership may be either unfruitful or even dangerous.

The practical ability to put knowledge and sound theory into practice, as evidenced by actually doing it, is important. This applies in the broader community as well as in the individual activities. This success in the management of affairs, whether personal or public, takes time and is difficult to acquire. It cannot be dispensed with. Few young men are sufficiently experienced to undertake either the responsibility of a county agent or of community leadership until they have been, at least, from three to five years out of college. They are, however, often called upon sooner than this.

Even though one may have all the qualifications just enumerated, if he lacks initiative, organizing ability, personality and other intangible personal factors, failure may be his reward. Some of these qualifications are difficult to define. Some are natural and inherited. Others are acquired. Few men possess them all, but every one more or less limits the success of leadership.

The rural characteristics which are strongest are individualism and independence, especially in business affairs. This leads to a feeling of individual sufficiency and often makes leadership difficult. Religious leadership is inherited and developed by the churches and their pastors. Educational leadership is provided by law and by the organization of schools. It is inherent in the situation. Agricultural leadership is now being developed as never before.

The county agent may have a large part in this development. It is his opportunity. There cannot be too much or too good rural leadership. "The more the agricultural forces are stimulated the greater the need for leadership," as Bailey has well pointed out.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership may often be stimulated and developed by inspirational and idealistic talks to audiences made up of the residents of the community. The possibilities of local growth and accomplishment, the application of the golden rule, the teaching of the doctrine that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" and the appeal for service, all help to establish ideals. The maintenance of high ideals by the county agent himself both by act and by constant reference, and the bringing in of outside speakers gifted in presenting ideals in an inspirational way, is usually one of the largest factors in the growth of local leadership.

Having discovered the leadership, its development and training are matters of importance. While abstract teaching and discussion of duties and qualifications of local leaders has its value, the most important factor in this development is undoubtedly the giving to men of things to do. Men learn to do by doing. They gradually assume responsibility as opportunity offers and duty calls. By so doing they gain confidence in themselves; according as they do well and wisely, they gain the confidence of the community. One act of leadership may commit the individual and often others as well to public duties and to efforts in community enterprises. This leadership grows with intelligent use.

No doubt one of the most important factors in the growth of leadership is the responsibility which comes to individual

farmers by sitting on local boards of directors or executive committees, whether these be of the local grange, the county farm and home bureau, or of commercial coöperatives. Information is gained, outlook is broadened, decisions have to be made and responsibility assumed. All these develop leadership qualities.

Many examples of this might be cited. None is more striking than that of President James R. Howard of the American Farm Bureau Federation. College trained and a successful farmer, he first sought the improvement of school facilities in his school community and largely through his efforts a consolidated school was established. When his county organized a farm bureau, Mr. Howard was the logical choice for president, and his qualifications and work were so outstanding that when his state federation was formed he was again the logical candidate for its president. So also Mr. Howard's qualifications, experience and contributions to the movement in his home state of Iowa won him the presidency of the American Farm Bureau Federation and his leadership is now national.

Situations sometimes call forth leadership unexpectedly. When there is a real job to be done and it is clear that some one must volunteer or be drafted, individuals rise to the occasion. The experience trains the individual. Through such events good leadership is sometimes discovered and developed.

#### THE RESULTS OF LEADERSHIP

It would be impracticable—if not impossible—to list here all the results of farm and home bureau leadership.

The most outstanding accomplishment in this field has been the discovery and the appointment of local community committeemen in the greater part of all of the rural communities of the United States. Such committeemen

in great numbers are now functioning. In one state alone there are more than 1,700 rural communities, and these communities are served by between eight and ten thousand committeemen. Even if half of these function a tremendous force of leadership has been set in motion.

In the nation there are probably 25,000 rural communities and nearly 100,000 local committeemen. Although these may not function to the highest degree possible, nevertheless, they have accomplished much, and by continued experience, understanding and appreciation of the opportunity, more should function and in a larger way. Each thing done means increased ability to do more things. This kind of leadership is permanent and it will grow and multiply.

The leadership which has been elected to responsibility in commodity marketing organizations is another very useful type. It calls for different qualities for business ability and special knowledge, but it is indispensable.

When all that has been accomplished by the farm and home bureaus in the way of leadership and organization is added to what already existed in the community and it is realized that all has been strengthened, stimulated and educated, it is easy to see that the discovery, training and growth of rural leadership has been one of the outstanding accomplishments of county agents. If they had done nothing more, this alone would have justified all that they have cost.

#### LEADERSHIP VERSUS ORGANIZATION

The problems of organization and leadership are indissolubly bound up together. Their solution is equally important. The one depends upon the other.

The stronger and the more complete the organization,

the greater the need for a vigorous, broad-minded, well-trained, large-viewed leadership. But there is less danger from unwise and inadequate leadership in the strong functioning organization because the organization itself is likely to correct the danger.

Wise and efficient leadership is, perhaps, most important in the initiatory and formative stages of an enterprise. The absence or presence of such leadership directly limits progress and achievements. On the average leadership usually involves more risk and is less dependable than organization. Leadership is individual. Organization is made up of numbers of individuals and the deficiencies of one individual are likely to be offset by the good qualities of another.

#### THE NEED FOR ORGANIZATION

The nature of the farmer's job as a producer and his circumstances and environment have tended to make him an individualist. This was especially true in the pioneer days of farming in America. Then the farmer was almost self-sufficient. He raised his own food except, perhaps, his sugar and salt, made his own clothing, built his own house, and satisfied most of the wants of his family at home.

As is shown in Chapter VII, the increase in farm efficiency released workers from the farm and led to the great growth of cities and to the specialization of industries. Gradually, the farmer became more dependent upon the town. He, himself, tended toward specialization.

The centralization of industry into great corporations, in some cases practical monopolies, meant that individual farmers must deal with powerful units with which they were not qualified to cope. Too often big business has taken advantage of this situation. In some cases it has



been a real advantage to farmers. Gradually a realization of his handicap in relationships with powerful business organizations has come to the farmer.

This situation is equally true in the more general field of his interests, as, for example, representation in the larger affairs of the State and Nation. The business man has developed extensively his industrial and trade associations. Every city has its chamber of commerce, every village its board of trade, and these organizations exert a powerful influence upon public policies. Labor has perfected its unions and has federated them. When large questions affecting public policy, or even affecting particularly the agricultural welfare, such as taxation, transportation, the tariff and others, come up for decision, the organizations of business and labor represent them and their voices count in the final decision. In the past the voice of the farmer has either been silent or altogether too weak and inadequate to receive the attention it should command.

The farmer has now sensed this situation and the present movement toward organization is one of practical preparation to meet it.

It is in the public interest that he should do so. Otherwise, public policy is likely to be one-sided, unfair and possibly actually injurious to the country's greatest industry. Inevitably, such a condition must react against the general public interest. The public should concern itself less with the dangers of the organization among farmers and more with its advantages. The dangers are readily controlled by regulative legislation; the advantages can be secured in no other way.

In the same way, the rural community is too often dominated by town and village interests and by business men, though it must be admitted that this is more be-

cause the farmer does not assert his power or exercise his rights and functions than it is because business interests desire to dominate. Moreover, this is in spite of the fact that the rural town or village as a rule exists, primarily, to serve the farmer. It is more difficult for countrymen to get together than it is for townsmen. Farmers are scattered over a large territory. Hours are required for farmers to get together for meetings or conferences, which business men, because of their location and their experience, can accomplish in minutes. The farmer is closely tied to his work, especially the livestock farmer and the farmer on the one-man or family farm.

The only way by which a farmer can meet this situation is by organization and by the election of farmer leadership to represent his interests on all proper occasions. This representation should be unpaid locally, but it will probably have to be paid in state and national affairs. It is wholly in the interests of a well-balanced development of a community, state and national life that the farmer should organize, providing that he does not go beyond his rights and what is fair to other groups and that the interests of all the elements of the population are considered. He must be fair. Organization must not function wholly in the class interest or without regard to others.

In short, the farmer is simply meeting the organization and the leadership of other interests, with the same kind of organization and leadership in his own field. It is high time that he did.

#### THE COUNTY AGENT AS AN ORGANIZER

While organization among farmers had developed to a considerable extent previous to 1910, it has had its great-

est and soundest development since the county agricultural agent came on the field. How much of this is due to circumstances, especially economic conditions, and how much of it is due to the county agent, there is no means of determining. Contrary to what is commonly credited to him, the county agent usually was not the cause for the unusual organization activity among farmers during the past few years. The cause for the most part already existed. Unless a real reason for organization does exist, the organization cannot be permanent. It can be held together temporarily, but is bound sooner or later to fail.

Many farmers have long felt the need of such organization, but have lacked the leadership and initiative to effect it. These, the county agent has supplied. He has simply made it easier to do what farmers already wanted to do or believed they should do. In some cases it has probably been necessary for county agents to point out the need for organization as a remedy for unfavorable conditions that exist. If the county agent, however, is the sole cause for the organization—if farmers organize just to be organized and without a real purpose—an early failure is courted.

Some early and noteworthy examples of organization among farmers are the Grange, especially in the Northeast, but also in the West, and the Farmers' Union in the South and Southwest. These organizations, which have existed for nearly half a century, have shown farmers some of the possibilities of organization and have accomplished certain results. In particular, the Grange has been a forum for discussion and a cradle in which many other farmers' organizations have been born. Other farmers' organizations, semi-political in character, or seeking class advantage, or usually aimed at the correction of definite abuses, have arisen, served a more or less useful purpose and disappeared.

Both this early experience and county agent leadership are, it is hoped, leading to a sounder and more permanent type of organization. The tendency is more and more to study particular situations and needs before organizing. An effort is also made to base organization on local units and to build up coöperative organization around commodities, in other words, to build an organization to deal with common problems on common ground. Moreover, the tendency in organization is toward constructive and not simply corrective objectives. All of these factors should make for real achievement and hence greater permanency in farmers' organizations.

The county agent is usually called upon or finds it desirable to use, at least, three types of organization work. The first of these may be called the production type and consists of the organization of a group of men with some common production problem, in order to work out this problem more satisfactorily and over a wider area. Good examples of this type are the cow testing association, the spray service and seed improvement associations. The second type, and a more common one, is the organization for buying or selling—selling grain, livestock, milk, wool, fruit, cotton, etc., and buying farm supplies, particularly seeds, feeds and fertilizers. The last type, with which the home demonstration agent is perhaps more largely concerned, is the social organization, examples of which are community clubs, etc. The latter type will be more fully treated in Chapter V.

#### ORGANIZING LOCAL MOVEMENTS

When the county agent arrived on the job, he found as a rule fairly good social organizations of farmers in most of the states, such as granges, farmers' clubs, and

the like. He also found a considerable number of commercial coöperative organizations working more or less successfully. There was little, if any, organization, the primary purpose of which was increased efficiency in production.

The one noteworthy exception to this was the cow testing association. A considerable number of these organizations had been developed as a sort of a by-product of farmers' institute and early college extension work. These, the county agents took hold of, strengthened, built up and multiplied in numbers. The purpose of these organizations was, primarily, to teach better methods of feeding and to discover and discard "boarder" cows by the use of milk scales and the butter fat test. To the county agent, this is an effective method of teaching these fundamentals of good dairy husbandry. Usually beginning with talking about this work himself—and perhaps doing some testing for individuals—the county agent leads a local neighborhood, by suggestion and assistance, to organize themselves into an association which can provide a full month's work for a cow tester. For this purpose usually twenty to thirty men are necessary. When such a tester is employed, he visits the herd of each owner once a month, assisting him with feeding and making general suggestions for improvements, as well as weighing and testing the milk. For this service the farmer pays the cost.

As a result of this work, large numbers of unprofitable cows have been discarded, with increased profits to individual herd owners by reducing or limiting their losses. Similar types of organization are coöperative bull circles, or the coöperative ownership of bulls. This is a simple form of production organization, but an effective one when it is so conducted that a high grade pure-bred bull replaces a scrub sire. County agents have also rendered much as-

sistance to breeders' associations in developing local county units or branches. This has served to bring together groups of men with common interests and to greatly facilitate and stimulate efforts in their respective communities and to increase numbers of pure-bred livestock, and hence prosperity.

A special form of production organization is the spray service which has been conducted in a few states. County agents and college specialists have found that to teach the life history of insects and diseases, and to demonstrate what to spray with in order to control these insects and diseases, is not sufficient. It has been found that the limiting factor in gaining control of these troubles is timeliness. It will not do to treat spraying solely as a problem of farm management. One cannot plan ahead of time to sow the oats on Monday and Tuesday and to spray on Wednesday. Exact time of spraying must be determined largely by weather conditions, temperature which in turn determines the rapidity of the opening of the buds, moisture present and future, all of which regulate the development of the insect or disease, and other similar factors. This means an expert trained assistant, watching the bud and leaf development, securing expert weather forecasts, and the development of some means of getting this necessary information quickly to growers.

This has been worked out in Western New York, for example, by a carefully organized telephone service which probably influences the use of from ten to twelve thousand spray rigs. A special assistant to the county agent is employed. In cases where the number of growers is small, the county agent may handle the service himself. Certain orchards, known as "criterion orchards," are specially watched and are under the entire control of the assistant, that is, the farmer sprays exactly when he

is advised that the time is right to spray. These orchards afford both checks and experience in conducting the service. As soon as it is determined to spray "criterion orchards" in a given section, the information is telephoned to three selected farmers in each neighborhood. By arrangement, these men call up three other farmers, and then in turn these three call up three more, and so on until all the fruit growers who want the service, and who have paid the fee which covers practically all the cost except the state specialist's supervision, have been informed. While this is a loose form of organization, it involves a good deal of skill and time to operate it, and represents a type which may be made very effective by the county agent. Similar examples of the use of this type of organization may be found in the control of rabbits and gophers in certain sections of the country.

Another type of production organization, aimed to render service to increase efficiency, is seed certification. Colleges and experiment stations are constantly developing new strains and approved new varieties of corn, small grains, timothy, alfalfa and other seeds. These are disseminated by placing them in the hands of individuals, but this is a slow and not always an effective measure. It has been found that organizing state, regional, or even county associations of growers interested in the use of such good seed, may be made a very effective means of increasing the use of it. Usually, such organizations work out a plan of certifying the original source of the seed, inspecting it for the presence of certain diseases, roguing out plants untrue to type, and then certifying the resulting product. The inspection is usually performed by experts from the college of agriculture who merely certify to certain conditions as they find them in the field or bin. The associations, on the basis of these findings, actually

certify the product, tagging and guaranteeing, so that the grower may be certain of the quality of his seed.

Other types of production service organizations which county agents have found useful might be cited, such as the operation of local lime crushing plants, power ditching machines, and the like, or land clearing, gopher eradication and others.

#### LOCAL MARKETING ASSOCIATIONS

The greatest immediate demand for the application of the county agent's organization and leadership abilities has proved to be that of coöperative buying and selling, particularly marketing. There has been great dissatisfaction on the part of the farmers with the present situation. In too many cases neither farmers nor county agents knew the exact remedy for the marketing difficulties experienced. Farmers, however, are feeling the urgent need for and demanding a solution of these problems; they are ready to try almost anything in order to get experience and to learn how they may work out these problems.

Grain marketing through coöperative elevators and the coöperative shipping of livestock were among the first attempts by farmers to work out this marketing problem. The packing, standardization and merchandising of citrous fruits in California is, perhaps, the most striking success of coöperative organization in marketing. With this, however, the county agents have had very little to do.

In the East the coöperative marketing of milk was one of the first problems on which farmers were ready for action. The comparative uniformity of this product, the fact that dairying is a common type of farming and business in many localities, made the problem of organization a little easier. The first requirement was information on conditions and proposals. This meant meetings of farm-



ers and thorough discussion of the question from all angles. These meetings, large numbers of which were held, enabled farmers to reach conclusions as to what they should do. With an understanding of needs came a desire for further detailed knowledge of ways and means to solve the problem. The county agent's next function was then to teach the principles underlying good organization: mutual respect and understanding, confidence in one another, sticking together, guarding against disrupting elements, choosing leadership that was responsible and officers that are the best obtainable—in short to call attention to the fundamentals which go to make up a sound and workable plan.

#### RELATION TO MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS

The farmers' coöperative marketing organization should be interested in supporting and securing the coöperation of county agents and their local supporting associations, the farm bureaus, because the primary functions of these public agencies are:

(1) To promote greater efficiency among farmers by helping to organize crop and animal improvement associations, and teaching how to grow roughage at home, keep accounts, improve the quality of farm products, etc.

(2) To teach and to help gather needed information on the cost of production and condition of crops and animal products as one of the bases for individual judgment as to what constitutes necessary quantities and reasonable and just prices.

(3) To assist in developing and maintaining efficient local and regional commodity marketing organizations, and encouraging the coöperative ownership by farmers of their own shipping and manufacturing facilities.

(4) To furnish local facilities or headquarters, such as

office and field organization, for and to introduce representatives of farmers' organizations, to explain and organize a movement locally.

On the other hand, coöperation with marketing organizations is desirable from the farm bureau and county agent educational and improvement standpoint, because such coöperative properly organized:

(1) Furnishes needed machinery for the adjustment of those difficulties and situations which are vital to profitable farming, but which cannot be handled by publicly supported educational institutions.

(2) Gives farmers suitable local organizations which may be federated into regionals to promote coöperative selling and collective bargaining.

(3) By effecting savings helps to increase the profits from farming and thus to put farming on a better business basis.

(4) Has the general effect of bettering rural economic and living conditions.

Relations on this basis may mean assistance by the county agent in securing conferences with county or regional officers, working out of county-wide educational plans, advising as to the local leadership, conditions and situations, calling of meetings for the purpose of discussing the coöperative organization and its purposes, speaking at meetings on the principles and general desirability of good organization. On the part of the farm bureau it may involve extending the facilities of the local offices to coöperative organizers for the purpose of holding committee meetings, conducting correspondence, etc.

The functions which are peculiarly those of the coöperative, in which the county agents should never engage and for which the coöperative should itself assume complete responsibility are:

(1) The receiving and paying out of all organization funds.

(2) The signing, witnessing and safe keeping of all agreements, etc., having to do with the sale of commodities.

(3) The actual organization of local or county branches, soliciting of members and all business arrangements connected therewith.

(4) The enforcement of contracts with dealers, and the adjustment of all disputes and complaints. In these matters the coöperative must make its own decisions.

(5) Assignment and instruction of all its own coöperative leaders or organizers.

(6) Agreements on the prices of commodities and arrangements for caring for surplus, etc.

#### ORGANIZATION FOR COÖPERATIVE BUYING

Though usually of less importance because it promises less saving—and that with more difficulty—than the coöperative selling of products, farmers are also demanding organization for coöperative buying of supplies. The products or goods which are usually handled by coöperatives, and which it is probably most important to buy coöperatively, chiefly on account of the control and superior quality thus secured, are somewhat in the order of importance named, seeds, feeds, fertilizers, twine, spray materials and certain others. Many coöperatives broaden the kinds of supplies which they handle too widely and get into lines in which, because of their nature, they cannot compete with the sales services of established organizations. Such lines are coal, oils, fencing, groceries, paints, farm machinery and similar material.

The demand for coöperative purchasing usually grows

out of poor service either by wholesalers or local dealers or both. In spite of this fact, the organization of co-operative buying associations has been the occasion of much trouble and criticism of county agents without, in most cases, corresponding results to farmers. In a good many instances—too many—county agents have pooled orders themselves. This practice got started during the war on account of the lack of service and the demand for good seed, cheaper supplies, etc. Because they were inexperienced, because in most cases they did not have the machinery or facilities to properly handle such business, because of bad payments and of goods not always of superior quality, the county agents have experienced lots of work and a great deal of trouble. The general result has been that they have accumulated a large amount of kicks from everybody who had any grievances, and had few thanks for their trouble from those who were really advantaged.

Some of the dangers of buying are illustrated by the experience of a county agent in Tennessee, who, when sugar was high and apparently going higher, persuaded many members of the local farm bureau to pool their orders for a quantity. Some delay was experienced in getting the sugar and when it did arrive sugar had dropped nearly fifty per cent. Many farmers refused to accept delivery, and those who did did so under protest. The county agent was in a bad fix but deserved small sympathy. While this is an extreme case, it illustrates possibilities.

The relations which a county agent—or a farm bureau for that matter—should have with commercial coöperative buying organizations are not unlike those recommended for coöperative selling. The functions of the county agent, and of the farm bureau as well, in such a relationship





should be confined to (1) lending moral support to the co-operative principle represented; (2) extending the usual office facilities in promoting dissemination of educational information upon coöperative organization, its limitations and its value; (3) advising with coöperative officials relative to finding out the commercial needs of farmers, particularly as to quality, and to other matters relating to successful operation, such as securing of county committees and good local representatives.

Some things which county agents often attempt to do themselves, but which should be left absolutely to those responsible for the coöperative organization, are: The setting up and maintaining of adequate organization to efficiently assemble and deliver orders of supplies to farmers, all responsibility for assembling orders, delivery of goods and collection of bills.

The coöperative organization should keep the county farm bureau officers and the county agent informed as to policies to be carried out in their respective counties and should furnish them, for their information only, with quotations on commodities offered for sale.

#### COLLEGE EXTENSION TEACHING

Under the present plan of operation of the extension services of the state colleges of agriculture, the county agents are made the county leaders of the college extension program and the local organizers of it.

Usually an agreement is entered into with the county association whereby its office is made the clearing house for all college extension work in the county. This results in farmers' needs and requests for work in the county by college specialists coming to the college through the county agent, who becomes the middleman between the college

and the farmer for all information other than that secured by personal correspondence or by bulletin. In the same way, the college program is carried to farmers through the county agent and through the local farm bureau machinery. For this purpose a suitable agreement or contract between the college extension service and the county association should be entered into. In New York State a part of this contract reads as follows:

"The program of work of the ..... County Farm and Home Bureau for 1920, duly adopted, and hereby mutually reaffirmed, is herewith attached and made a part of this agreement. For the purpose of assisting in carrying out this program the State Leader, under authority given by the Director of Extension of the State College of Agriculture, agrees that the College will furnish through its central extension offices such services of its extension specialists and other representatives and such publications and other subject matter material, as may be needed and as are available. The expenses of such specialists will be shared on the zone system, and services will be furnished in such amount and in such form as may be mutually agreed upon from time to time with the proper representatives of the extension service."

Such an agreement puts a large responsibility on the county agent and the local bureau and calls for real leadership on the agent's part in its execution. He is responsible to farmers, on the one hand, to see that they get the share of college service to which they are entitled. He is responsible to the college, on the other hand, to be efficient in handling and distributing its service to farmers. This means a knowledge of farmers' needs and desires, of what the college has to offer, and of the best means to bring the knowledge and skill of the specialist to bear on the farmers' program.



Since extension work is generally carried on through community meetings or institutes, schools, conferences, inspections, etc., it follows that it devolves upon the county agent to arrange satisfactory dates with farmers for meetings in their communities to get the desired specialists there. He must make the necessary local arrangements, advertise the meeting, follow up the teaching and the interest developed in the community afterward, and gather and report results. This will require much correspondence, telephoning and telegraphing in arranging the details, all of which calls for a high degree of energy and organizing ability. It will also involve many long trips in the Ford, late evening meetings and getting home after midnight.

In arranging for the work of the college specialist in the county, the first consideration, as has already been pointed out, is the arriving at community and county programs, and means of carrying them out. This should include subjects to be discussed at winter meetings, kind of help desired and particular persons desired, and the time of meetings. Then the organization of the college services in the community can best be accomplished by the agent in two ways, (1) by request to the college scheduling officer for the specialist desired at a particular meeting, to put the program and its means for solution before local people, (2) by conferences with specialists themselves to arrange for demonstrations, inspection work, certification, and the like. This we have already discussed in Chapter I under "Using a Program of Work."

One of the most important responsibilities of the county agent is to make the wisest possible use of these facilities and technically trained men provided by the state and federal governments. This calls for vigorous, clear-sighted leadership, good judgment and good organizing

ability. Many possibilities for accomplishing good are at stake. A measure of the county agent's efficiency is whether or not he gets the most out of these facilities for his own county. Moreover, he stands between the college and the farmers of his county and on him depends largely the most helpful relationships.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELATION OF THE FARM BUREAU AND THE COUNTY AGENT TO COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES

No problem with which the county agent has to deal is more alive and full of possibilities for failure and trouble than that of his relationship to commercial enterprises, especially enterprises of a coöperative character. These relationships are the source of many difficulties with farmers on the one hand and with dealers and middlemen on the other. With the pressure of an unfavorable economic situation and as a result of a keen desire for a way out, farmers have everywhere seized upon coöperative organization for buying and selling as a way to eliminate what seems to them unnecessary and too high costs of handling their products to the consumer. As a consequence they have naturally demanded that county agents whose declared purpose is the improvement of agricultural conditions help them in perfecting the organizations through which they may buy and sell coöperatively.

Neither the farmer nor the consumer has fully understood the limitations under which the county agent necessarily works. The farmer especially has not always appreciated that the county agent is a public service and not a class representative and that it is his obligation to teach principles and to demonstrate practices and not to act as the agent of farmers in coöperative buying or selling. It is difficult to believe that many middlemen and dealers have not deliberately misunderstood the county agent's

position. The consumer has not always understood the underlying educational purpose of the county agent's work and has not seen the advantages of uniformity, standardization and improved quality which the coöperative organization of farmers is sure to bring to him. Moreover, there has sometimes been political interference or attempted interference with the county agent and his work at the suggestion of interested parties, by local boards of supervisors, by state legislatures and even by Congress.

#### A LIVE QUESTION

With the knowledge of what the county agent has done for him in the way of more efficient production, the farmer naturally expects that the county agent will help him in the same manner with his problems of marketing and distribution. As farmers sometimes put it, "We have had enough of teaching how to grow bigger crops from which we receive a less return than for smaller crops, until we know better how to market at a profit what we do grow." The general situation which lies back of this feeling on the part of farmers, accentuated by the war, has been made increasingly difficult by the economic aftermath of the war. The farmer has called on the county agent to help him with his problems of organization for coöperative marketing and for coöperative buying until the average county agent now devotes almost 50 per cent of his time to these problems. So far as the absence of coöperative action is a limiting factor in successful agriculture and so far as county agent's teaching is sound and his activities legitimate it is desirable that he should do so.

The extent of the activities in helping farmers to organize for coöperative marketing is indicated in the last report of the States Relations Service. In the thirty-three states

in the North and West alone the county agents assisted in forming 1,701 coöperative associations during 1921. The combined membership of these associations was 227,424 farmers and they did a business of over forty million dollars. During this year county agents also report having assisted 123,035 farmers in buying and selling through other channels to the extent of more than ten million dollars additional.

On the other hand, those middlemen and dealers who handle the supplies or buy the products which farmers with the help of the county agent have now organized themselves to buy and to sell feel that their business has been interfered with by a publicly employed agent. This group, which probably constitutes less than five per cent of the population, is well organized and has been most insistent in its objections, claiming that public agents are interfering with private business. The position of this group is stated in an editorial appearing in "Who is Who in the Grain Trade" in the issue of November 20, 1921:

"The county agents were not created to help farmers to market their grain. Had this been the understanding, when the Smith-Lever Bill was under debate in Congress, the measure would never have been passed. If the farmers can be helped as business men by paid agents of the government, why not the shoemakers, the wholesale and retail grocers, the dentists, the manufacturers or jobbers of any kind, or even the much-despised grain dealers? How can the Federal Government give aid to one branch of industry and withhold it from another?"

This statement indicates a fundamental misconception of the purpose of the county agent movement. What this group of citizens forget is that farmers have not only a perfect right, but an obligation as well, to seek to establish the most efficient methods of handling their products.

If it can be shown that through coöperative organization a higher grade of more uniform agricultural products can be sold to the consumer at a more reasonable price and still net the producer a better profit, then it is both in the interest of the producer and consumer that the new method be followed. As one student of the subject has pointed out, "the railroad was not invented to punish the man who was furnishing transportation so much less efficiently with his stage-coach; it represented merely a better method. The inventor of the linotype machine was not 'mad' at the old-fashioned typesetter. He merely found a better way to do an important piece of the world's work. Progress is not made by appeals to class prejudice."

Other members of this class popularly known as middlemen take a more reasonable view of the county agent and the activities which he represents. This group seeks to adapt itself to changed conditions and to meet the new problems created by coöperative organizations among farmers. Its representatives, though often misinformed as to the real purposes of the farm bureau, adopt an inquiring attitude.

"What influence is the farm bureau and other similar co-operative movements going to have upon the manufacturer of feeds, fertilizers, orchard sprays, and other farm supplies in his method of selling and distributing his goods?"

asks the representative of a large advertising agency making a study of the matter for its clients.

"What will be the ultimate effect of the farm bureau upon the thousands of dealers who have been handling farm supplies for years, and upon whom the manufacturer now depends to furnish him with needed supplies? Will the farm bureau eventually assume the functions of a dealer, carry a stock of sup-

plies throughout the year, and serve as a financial bridge between the manufacturer and the consumer as the dealer has done, thus eliminating the dealer and making a shortcut between the manufacturer and the consumer?"

This inquiry, of course, represents an extreme fear not warranted by the facts in the case. But it also indicates a much more rational view of the problems which such organizations create and a much more satisfactory approach to their solution.

#### THE INTENT OF CONGRESS

Since all discussions of this question sooner or later come back to the original authority on which the work of the county agent is based, it may be desirable to examine the law. The Smith-Lever act itself does not define specifically the activities of county agents, but confers broad authority to give "instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics." To determine then the real intent of Congress we must turn to the discussions in that body when the bill was passed and particularly to the report of the committee which introduced the Smith-Lever Bill. The Honorable A. F. Lever, Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, who, perhaps more than any other one person, was influential in shaping up this legislation and in securing its passage through Congress, in the elaboration of his remarks on the bill made it clear that its purpose included the economic as well as the productive phases of farm life. He said:

"To teach the farmer the best methods of increasing production is exceedingly important, but not more vitally so than is the importance of teaching him the best and most economical methods

of distribution. It is not enough to teach him how to grow bigger crops, he must be taught to get the true value for these bigger crops, else Congress will be put in the attitude of regarding the work of the farmer as a kind of philanthropy. The itinerant teacher or demonstrator will be expected to give as much thought to the economic side of agriculture, to marketing, standardizing and grading of farm products as he gives to the matter of larger acreage and yields. He is to assume leadership in every movement whatever it may be, the aim of which is better farming, better living, more happiness, more education and better citizenship."

It is clear from this authoritative statement that the county agent is well within the intent of the law in assisting farmers to work out more efficient methods of marketing and distribution. But since the administration of a law is fully as important as determining its application to practical problems, it is desirable to see what the attitude of the States Relations Service in the Department of Agriculture, which is charged with the administration of the Lever Act, is on this question. Dr. A. C. True, the chief of the States Relations Service, has recently expressed the Department's view as follows:

"That the agents should assist the farmers of the county with every problem connected with their business from the preparation of the soil to the marketing of their products. It is natural for the farmers to look to the agent as their agricultural adviser and leader in marketing as well as production and to expect him to give them information on questions of harvesting, grading and packing. For the past two years the marketing problem has been the most vital one to all branches of agriculture. It is believed that it is legitimate and proper for the agent to encourage coöperative marketing, to obtain information as to what products should be worth, where the best markets may be found and how



these markets may be reached at the least expense to the producer."

Not only do we have these official pronouncements as to the intent of the law and the application of it to the work of the county agent, but we have the opinion of the President of the United States himself on this point. In his message to Congress in December, 1921, President Harding said:

"Every proper encouragement should be given to the coöperative marketing programs. These have proven very helpful to the coöperative communities of Europe. In Russia the coöperative community has become a recognized bulwark of law and order and saved individualism from an engulfment in social paralysis. Ultimately they will be accredited with the salvation of the Russian State."

#### THE PUBLIC INTEREST

This broad statement of what the President considers sound public policy affords ample justification for the legislation which sanctions the activities of county agents so universally complained of by that portion of the population which acts as agents in getting the farmer's products to the consumer. It applies to the activities of farm bureaus as well. It makes clear the position that the public agencies throughout the country dealing with agricultural problems have quite generally assumed. The problems of marketing and distribution are of as vital importance to the whole public, consumer as well as producer, as are the problems of production. Coöperative organization, because of its educational values, because of the standardization which it brings about in agricultural products, because of its non-profit character and because it represents or should represent the best thought of the peo-

ple themselves on the problem, is an important means of meeting the problem. Public agricultural institutions are, therefore, supporting the theory and the practice of co-operative organization among farmers for buying and selling and are endeavoring to teach the sound principles based on world experience which should govern it.

The attack on the activities of county agents and farm bureaus in this field seldom, if ever, comes neither from the mass of consumers nor from the mass of producers. It usually comes from certain of that small percentage of individuals who are directly engaged in the handling of farm products between producer and consumer and who fear what they call interference with their business. Their fears are unfounded if they are really performing useful and needful services. Instead of county, state and national legislatures cutting down their appropriations for county agent work as they are so often urged to do by these interests, because it is complained that too much of the agent's energies and time go into this field of coöperative organization for marketing purposes, these bodies should increase their appropriations. The consumer is even more vitally concerned with the working out of this problem just at this time than he is with the solution of the problems of production. The same is true of farmers. This is the issue and it should be squarely met. If legislators choose to fight the personal battle of this small minority against the interests of the great majority of producers and consumers, then the issue should be made perfectly clear to all concerned. This is the only basis on which it can be settled.

It is then sound public policy to regard the establishment of a coöperative organization to buy farm supplies or to sell farm products, when such an organization is based on a real need and upon a real desire of the group

to be organized, in exactly the same way as the establishment of a lime or an alfalfa demonstration is regarded and to render the same kind of assistance. It is sound public policy for the county agent to make a statement of the facts and conditions surrounding the problem and the possible results to be obtained by the action, and to give advice in establishing the demonstration. He does not and should not assume any executive functions or responsibilities in connection with the enterprise.

#### WHAT COUNTY AGENTS DO

Since there is much misunderstanding as to the application of this policy and as to what county agents really do in relation to the needs and activities of farmers for coöperative buying and selling, it is desirable to state these quite definitely.

It is the aim of county agents to assemble and to present to farmers through publications, lectures, demonstrations, conferences and discussions the facts bearing on results of coöperative organizations in given localities and under given conditions. If organization is then determined upon by the farmers concerned, it is the further duty of the county agent to give all information at his command as to the best ways and means by which coöperative organizations may be effected and utilized. Both county agents and farm bureaus are advocates of the principle of coöperative action. They assist coöperative groups by furnishing (1) the facts as to the need for the objects proposed, (2) the probable best means for meeting the needs, and (3) advice as to the best ways to put the plans into practical application. This aid of course should be given only when farmers want and ask for such assistance.

## WHAT COUNTY AGENTS DO NOT DO

While believing in and advocating the principles of co-operative action, county agents should always avoid urging such action on the part of farmers or any propaganda to bring about coöperative organization. There should be a real need for coöperative action and there should be a strong desire for such action by a group, before county agents are justified in helping the group to organize. Neither does the county agent aim actually to do the business for these organizations. Even if it were legitimate for him to do so it would not be advisable because it would be likely to defeat the essential principle of local initiative and local responsibility. County agents should never be associated with such coöperative organization in any business way.

It cannot be asserted that there are not some agents who, as a result of their own zeal and the enthusiasm of the moment, or more likely under the pressure of certain individuals or groups of farmers who have not thought the question through carefully, taking into consideration all its future bearings, have not at times violated these principles and rules of action. Such violations are the chief basis of complaint and they are the only grounds that those complaining have to stand on. However, such cases are not common and as a rule these principles have been, as they should continue to be, guiding ones throughout the history of the movement.

While the county farm bureau is an independent local association of farmers and has a perfect right to engage directly in coöperative buying and selling, it is not believed that it is usually good policy for it to do so, for reasons pointed out elsewhere. It can probably function

best by supporting the county agent and applying its energies to the working out of the county program.

### FARM BUREAU OBJECTIVES

In order that we may better understand the true relation of the problems of coöperative organization for buying and selling to the whole problem of agriculture and thus be better able to measure the activities of county agents in this field against their activities in the field of production, it may be desirable to define the larger objectives of farm bureaus and county agents. This ought to help us in determining what should be their relationship to commercial activities.

All county agents' objectives are educational. In general the same is true of farm bureaus, although to a less extent and probably with more exceptions. Briefly, the two principal objectives of both county agents and farm bureaus are, (1) to make farming more profitable and (2) to make country life reasonably satisfying. In the interests of the whole public as well as of farmers themselves it is imperatively essential that there be maintained upon the land a vigorous, intelligent, self-reliant agricultural citizenship. This can only be obtained by securing and retaining such conditions as will make farming a reasonably profitable business and the country a financially and socially satisfying place in which to live.

Naturally we expect that the specific plans and programs of county agents and farm bureaus will be such as promise the surest and speediest road to these ends. An adequate farm income is recognized as of first importance. Aside from the social phases of country life problems, then we should expect programs to include two main lines of effort, (1) how to secure efficient production, (2) how to

buy supplies and to sell products most efficiently. Both county agents and their supporting agencies, the farm bureaus, will naturally approach the solution of these problems from the educational standpoint and in their relation to public welfare as well as to the welfare of farmers.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRODUCTION

There is much loose talk about arbitrarily reducing production and tending to minimize the problem of production. Its purpose is really to emphasize marketing and distribution problems rather than to minimize production problems. In relation to production there are two fundamental facts which must always be kept in mind.

In the first place everybody must be adequately fed. If farmers do not perform this task well themselves, the Government must in the interest of the people to be fed find some way to do it itself. Moreover, the public has a right to demand the greatest possible efficiency in production consistent with a fair standard of living on the farm; and farmers have a public obligation to be reasonably efficient.

In the second place, efficient production still offers the biggest opportunity and the largest incentive for individual gain. While it is true that the effect of big crops on the nation on the whole is likely to be lower prices, perhaps below the cost of production and usually with a smaller net return to the producer, nevertheless, the effect of a big crop secured by the individual as a result of his own efficiency, and with reasonable expenditure of money and effort, is usually greater profit to that individual. Every good farmer is trying to get the largest possible crop with a reasonable expenditure of time and money; and if he succeeds he is apt to be proud of it. It is

usually true also that those farmers who have found their business most profitable and most satisfying are those who have been able to secure crops above the average at a reasonable cost of production.

It is, therefore, both the individual farmer's public obligation and his personal intention to continue to produce as large crops as he can with reasonable means and continually to strive for increased efficiency in his business. The public, including the middleman, does not object to any activities of county agents and farm bureaus that tend to bring about this result. It is clearly in the public interest. What the public does not always understand and what the middleman complains of is the application of county agent's and the farm bureau's activities to commercial organization for buying and selling. It is on this point that the public needs to be clear.

#### COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

When we speak of commercial activities among farmers in a public sense we usually mean coöperative buying and selling.

There seems to be a tendency in some quarters to desire to limit the activities of public agricultural agencies to the increasing of production and to believe that it is not a public function to undertake to help farmers solve their commercial problems. Strangely enough, few persons have objected to the making of appropriations for the general advocacy of coöperation and to the teaching of coöperative principles. Legislatures have even been willing to pass permissive coöperative laws. But when it comes to the application of the principles advocated and to the practical utilization of the legislation through the advice and demonstrations of county agents, opposition usually arises.

This is especially true of those comparatively small groups of persons who are engaged in handling farmers' products to the consumer.

For example, certain business men in a small city in a county maintaining a county agent in coöperation with farmers through their county association had always been boosters for the county agent work and had supported appropriations by the local Board of Supervisors. When, however, the needs of farmers demanded the organization of a coöperative milk producers' association which began a retail milk delivery business in that city, they took vigorous exception to the county agent's activities in assisting the organization of this efficient local coöperative. In defense of their attitude they pointed out that milk sold for about six cents a quart in their city some ten years ago and that it now sells for sixteen cents. Of course the increase was charged to the coöperative organization which had been formed with the aid of the county agent. One of the most vigorous objectors was a supervisor who happened to be a dentist in the town. He seemed utterly oblivious to the fact that the same reasons which led him to charge \$2.50 for filling a tooth in 1921, which he had been willing to do for 75 cents in 1911, operated in the milk business as well. Nor did he take into consideration the fact that an adequate price for milk insured a steady supply of a high quality product for the future.

#### THE PUBLIC IS CONCERNED

It is as much a public function to help to work out the problems of marketing and distribution of farm products as it is to assist in maintaining and increasing the efficiency of production. Efficient marketing and distribution mean standardization of products and packages, bet-



ter quality, uniformity and a steady flow to market, all of which are as important to the consumer as to the producer. Public institutions, farm bureaus and county agents should stand firmly on this ground regardless of opposition.

It is urged as an objection by some that since county agents help to organize coöperative associations which may be maintained for the purpose of giving a group of farmers a better position from which to bargain with other citizens of the state, they should not be aided by taxing all of the citizens of the state. The answer is, that if coöperative association is effective in enabling farmers to secure a larger share of the retail prices paid by consumers for their products, the entire state will in the end be benefited by the resulting maintenance of or the possible increase in the food supply. Thus it is well known that few farmers are able to compete with city industries in the wages paid to laborers and as a result the tendency is to reduce crop acreage.

It is also true that in nearly all effective coöperative organizations the central purpose is not to increase prices by controlling the market. In fact, that is not possible, except with special crops which are grown only in very restricted areas. The real purpose of coöperative organization is rather saving through the promotion of more efficient systems of buying and selling and so to distribute products as to avoid the gluts in the market which so frequently result in a loss of revenue to the growers and in the waste of food that should go to consumers.

#### POSSIBLE DANGERS

There have been and still are those who would have the farm bureau itself enter directly into coöperative buying

and selling, forgetting that this is only one of the many important problems in the solution of which farm bureaus can render assistance, and which are vital to the successful organization and the development of agriculture. True, the need in this field is very large, for the abuses have been large. Sound judgment and business experience, however, indicate that commercial transactions require a business organization on a local unit and commodity basis adapted to this specific purpose and that this organization must necessarily be so constructed that it is not adapted to do other things. Moreover, it is usually impossible as well as impracticable to combine commercial and educational activities, the one prejudicing the success of the other.

The question is, therefore, shall we divert this great educational and representative organization which has been builded, into a single channel, making it over to meet one of the important problems in the agricultural field, or shall we use it educationally to encourage and to foster specific local units and commodity agencies adapted to the service which can meet the problem? An educational policy will leave the farm bureau organization to continue its educational activities, to complete the marketing organization program, to help establish and to federate more local agencies, to foster and to develop a more adequate and satisfying country life—in short, to round out the program. By following this policy the farm bureaus will have retained their identity and will not have been swallowed up by a single phase of the problem.

Fortunately, on this point the American Farm Bureau Federation, whose leadership will be extremely potent, has already chosen wisely and in accordance with this policy. If its leadership is followed, the future of farm bureaus in respect to this problem looks bright. The American Fed-



Farmers in Essex County, New York, bringing in their small individual lots of wool to the warehouse for grading and pooling. Standardization of products and packages, better quality, uniformity, a steady flow to market, all of which tend to result from well conducted coöperative enterprises, are as important to the consumer as to the producer.



The county agent's office should have a business-like appearance. To modern business office equipment should be added exhibits, pictures, maps, charts and other illustrations of the work. An efficient clerk, stenographer or secretary adds much to the general efficiency of the county agent's office.



eration has declared itself in respect to both state and county farm bureaus, as follows:

"The farm bureau as an organization shall not engage in commercial activities nor shall it hold stocks or bonds in organizations undertaking such activities. It may encourage, however, the organization of such activities or industries as may seem necessary or advisable to the board of directors."

#### THE COUNTY AGENT'S POSITION

The attitude which the county agent should take upon the question of engaging directly in buying or selling for farmers is still clearer. If it is not the business of the farm bureau it is certainly much less the business of the county agent to attempt to buy supplies for farmers. Usually no great savings can be made and farmers can make these savings themselves by buying in quantity and paying in cash. The public has no obligation to pay for the time and overhead expense of the county agent in making this small saving which is not of importance in any case. Moreover, as has been pointed out, the county as a unit is not of a character to lend itself well to the distribution of supplies purchased. A county agent, a part of whose salary is paid from public funds, is not justified in spending his time buying or selling in competition with private agencies not so subsidized. It has been shown that there are other more important problems for the county agent to spend his time and energy upon, including the teaching of the principles which underlie sound organization and the development of initiative and leadership among farmers. The county agent needs to be careful that he does not spend his time in saving a few cents for farmers where he should be helping them to earn many dollars.

## A SOUND PUBLIC POLICY

It should be clear that the function of the county agent in relation to coöperative organization among farmers should be to so present the facts to farmers that it will cause and help them to think through their own problems and decide upon their own responsibility what it is desirable to do. Farmers cannot and should not be told what to do or what not to do in coöperative buying or selling. They should be helped to help themselves since this will strengthen their own ability to solve their problems.

The principle that the county agent should confine his work on marketing as well as production problems to educational activities is sound and should be rigidly adhered to. While he should at all times maintain a sympathetic and understanding contact with such undertakings and be ready to assist in suggesting the most efficient type of organization he should never take an active part in organizing or operating or assume responsibility for any marketing undertaking.

There are certain basic principles which underlie coöperative organization for marketing or for buying supplies. If these are not adhered to, failure is almost inevitable. Farmers can get knowledge of these principles either by expensive experience or by seeking, securing and practicing what the experience of others teaches. They are entitled to have this experience and advice readily available. The county agent and the farm bureau are the obvious local sources of this information.

## CHAPTER V

### PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CONTACTS

It is undoubtedly one of the handicaps of any large organization that it tends to minimize personal contacts and to substitute mere machinery for them. On the other hand, it is a quality of good leadership that it makes much of personal contacts. How to maintain a proper balance so as to retain the value of the personal relation and leadership and at the same time secure the benefit from organized or concerted action, is a problem which calls for the best skill of the county agent.

#### A LIMITING FACTOR

Probably nothing can take the place of the personal influence of one individual upon another as a means of securing desirable reactions. If it were possible to do extension teaching directly by personal contact between instructor and farmer, this would be ideal. But the time, money and men available will not permit the reaching of a sufficient number of persons to justify this. Therefore, the personal relation must be approximated or reduced to the minimum consistent with a proper balance and the efficient use of funds.

But there is still another side to the personal contact method. Especially when contacts originate as individual requests, the work done is likely to be of a miscellaneous character and often trifling as well. Under such circumstances, the net result at the end of a season may not be as

great as if well organized and coördinated. So that even personal contacts need to be made with a definite worthwhile purpose in view. Personal contacts so organized that they contribute toward a useful end are often the best investment of time and effort.

In all public work the personal contact is a limiting factor. Public men too often fail to understand problems unless they are able to talk with the average man in the street about them and to get his opinions and reactions. The public frequently misconstrues or misinterprets what a public man says because it does not know him personally and therefore does not understand his normal reactions. Such personal contact between leaders and individuals typical of the public or mass are always desirable to the degree necessary to be able to understand and interpret correctly. Personal contact is essential to effective leadership.

The county agent should always keep his personal contacts at the maximum consistent with the efficient use of his time. But circumstances will in the majority of cases inevitably compel the supplementing of the direct personal contact method by some other method, because a sufficiently large number of people cannot otherwise be reached. Probably the best substitute for an individual personal contact is the small demonstration or lecture in which there is opportunity for questions. This is an approximation of the ideal personal contact. Correspondence through the personal letter may make a very good substitute, but this depends to a great extent on the writer. As a rule circular letters necessarily lack personality.

#### CONTACTS IN THE OFFICE

Nine hundred and seven farmers called at a county agent's office in the North and West yearly on the average



for the six-year period from 1915 to 1920. This number is increasing and was more than twelve hundred in 1920. In certain counties the number of office calls is from two to three times this number, depending largely on the location of the office in the county with reference to its center, its general accessibility and attractiveness, on the local policy and on the personality of the county agent. The 1,000 or more voluntary calls made at his office annually constitute a real opportunity for service and a challenge to the county agent. In addition to personal visits, thousands of telephone calls are received annually.

The office call is a valuable contact because it is personal—man to man. Moreover, it usually represents effort and initiative on the part of the caller. It also indicates knowledge of the county agent and appreciation of the fact that he may be able to render a needed service. It implies confidence that the county agent will be able to furnish what is wanted. The office caller is a seeker after something. The county agent has or should have in his office all the facts at hand—in references, charts, figures, proofs. Usually it is the county agent's own fault if the maximum value of the office call is not secured and the farmer given real help.

Some county seats or office centers are so located that they cannot serve the whole county. This will be readily seen by comparing two counties. The county seat of county number one is the geographical center of a level, gently rolling area with splendid state roads radiating from the county seat at regular intervals. A trolley system also extends out from the center in all directions as do steam railroads. It is a natural business and trading center. The number of office calls in this county in 1921 was 2,254. The county seat of county number two is a railroad junc-

tion point on one side of a large county. It is not a logical or geographical center. Neither is it a trade and business center. The county is rough and mountainous, has less wealth, fewer state roads and railroads and no trolley lines. The number of calls at the county agent's office in this county was 1,546. The greater part of these office calls come from the community in which the office is located; but there is no better center in the county. Greater extremes than these may be found in certain mountainous counties where, for example, there are no railroads, no improved highways and very few automobiles. An effort should always be made to locate the county agent's office at the point of greatest accessibility in the county. This is usually the county seat, because the problem of central location is also met with in other phases of county activities.

A good location of the office in the town is also essential. The office should preferably be on the ground floor and in or near the principal trading center. It should be so situated that it is not difficult to find and to use it. Some county agents actually prevent farmers from making use of their offices because of their failure to advertise or to make it convenient to use them. On the other hand, an office may be too convenient so that it becomes a mere lounging place and checking room, thus tending to preclude the carrying on of important business there.

The office should be prominently labeled. In some cases it may be desirable to advertise it in local papers or to put up directions in such places as garages, livery stables and stores telling how to get to it. An upstairs room on the second or third floor is very undesirable except in large city centers where elevators are available. The best location as a rule is a ground-floor room on a side street near that part of the city where farmers do most of their trading. An office with a chamber of commerce and with

too expensive equipment which forms too great a contrast with conditions under which the farmer lives is undesirable. It tends to repel rather than to attract farmers.

#### THE OFFICE ITSELF IMPORTANT

The interior of the office is worthy of much consideration. It is very important that it be neat, orderly and business-like, but not to the extent of being cold and forbidding. It should, on the other hand, be inviting and attractive so that visitors will feel welcome and at home. But care must be used not to carry this to the extent of tempting the office visitor to remain in the office after his business has been transacted. The office should not be a lounging place for loafers, but a busy, workmanlike place of business.

Preferably, the county agent's offices should consist of two or three rooms. An outside general reception room with a big table, files, book cases, a stenographer's desk, etc., is very desirable. Such a room should also be large enough for conferences and small meetings on occasion. If another connected waiting and rest room for country people can be made available, this is very desirable. The county agricultural agent and the home demonstration agent should each have separate and private offices off the main central office where they can concentrate on their work, dictate letters and talk privately with visitors.

The meeting of an office caller is an art which should be studied and cultivated. He should be made to feel welcome and at ease; but at the same time encouraged to state his business definitely and promptly and to ask his questions without unnecessary delay. The county agent should always be courteous and cordial, but at the same time definite, encouraging and stimulating in his discussion and replies, so that the caller will be left with a desire to

come again. The caller should not be hurried, but he should be left with no excuse to stay and visit after he has obtained what he wants. How to dismiss an office caller without offense is as important and as much of an art as welcoming one. It demands firmness, an air of finality without any suggestion of brusque dismissal or lack of cordiality.

A county agent's office may be made to promote the work by giving it not only a businesslike appearance but a farm atmosphere as well. To modern business office equipment should be added exhibits and pictures illustrating the work, charts showing progress and results, a news and advertising bulletin board and plenty of demonstration material collected in season and displayed both within and without the office. The office itself may be made a teacher and a source of information.

A factor of considerable importance in an office, as numbers of county agents will testify, is an efficient clerk and stenographer or secretary. She should have the same ability to meet and to serve people that we have described for the county agent. Such an office secretary may take much of the load of office calls off the shoulders of the county agent by her ability to give satisfactory information, to satisfy the inquiries of callers and to do all this as well as he can. This will permit the county agent more time in the field.

#### CONTACT BY CORRESPONDENCE

The written letter is an important though a second-hand form of personal contact which may be of great usefulness. Since it is easier and requires less time for its use, it reaches a much larger number of individuals at less cost than does the office call. The average county agent receives and sends out several thousand personal letters each year.

Replies to definite written inquiries of farmers are probably the most effective letter contacts, since they represent a definitely expressed need and effort on the part of the inquirer writing the letter. But personal letters originated by the agent with the purpose of suggesting improved methods, stimulating and encouraging to action, wisely used, are full of helpful possibilities.

Letters are likely to be of value to the receiver in direct proportion as they give a satisfactory answer to a real need for information and advice, or as they encourage and stimulate desirable reactions. The effectiveness of letter writing also depends upon the extent to which the writer puts his personality into the letter and gives his information individual and personal application. Since it is more difficult to do this in a circular letter than a personal one, circular letters are less useful.

Promptness in attending to correspondence is a necessary virtue. Failure on the county agent's part to answer letters promptly and satisfactorily not only wastes an opportunity for useful service but very often results in actual injury to the work in the county. Any one who has had large experience in handling correspondence knows the vital importance of prompt answer to inquiries.

Sarcasm and acrimonious debate have no place in letters. Every county agent will receive letters asking inexcusably foolish questions, making impossible proposals and suggestions and often severely criticizing himself or his work. One may write a sarcastic, critical or argumentative reply if he must; but it will always be better, having relieved himself of his thoughts, to hold the letter over night and then to tear it up or forget to mail it. Experience has proved this course not only safe but wise and satisfactory.

## CONTACT IN THE FARM VISIT

There is probably no more effective or satisfactory contact made by a county agent than that made with the farmer on his own farm when the visit is made for a definite purpose and at the farmer's request. Here the farmer and the agent meet where the problem exists. Advice and suggestion given under such circumstances should be valuable if ever. The county agent can see the situation intimately and should be able to fit his advice to conditions.

Especially, when such a visit is made in response to a request for information and help on a problem, is it useful because it indicates a desire for help and initiative on the inquirer's part. He is likely to be in a receptive frame of mind. The chances of a right kind of reaction to do things are best under such circumstances. The need for great care in giving advice has already been pointed out. It is doubly important here. Usually it is best simply to give the facts and to call attention to needs and probable good ways of meeting them, leaving the farmer to make his own decision. Too often farmers insist upon definite advice or recommendation and are not content with facts or principles.

A county agent must not be afraid to say that he does not know. It is better both for the inquirer and the informer frankly to admit lack of knowledge or information when it exists, than to appear to be wiser than one really is, or to give an incorrect or an evasive answer. This requires knowledge of one's limitations, good judgment and courage. Men will usually respect the county agent more if he does not pretend to know what he does not know. But no one is in a better position to secure needed information, and the county agent should always be ready to do this.

The appearance, conduct and attitude of the county

agent in making a farm visit is important. It will be well if his automobile is not too expensive, because this suggests an easy time and a good salary. The county agent should not be so well dressed as to give any suggestion of hesitancy to get his feet or clothes dirty or to lend a helping hand with the hay or with repairing some farm machinery, nor to make the farmer feel that he ought not to invite the agent to the barn or field. On the other hand, many county agents go too far and dress so carelessly as to appear slouchy in dress and to be catering for favor by this means. This sets a bad example. In a word, the county agent making a farm visit, should be his own self-respecting self, and dressed for the occasion. He should never be patronizing, but always free and open and inviting questions and confidence. Without being in too much of a hurry, he should be businesslike and leave as soon as he is through. He should not waste either his own or the farmer's time.

#### CONTACT IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

Clarity and conciseness in public talks, together with ability to stop when one has delivered his message, are jewels much to be desired in the crown of a public speaker. The ability to concentrate on a few outstanding important points is very desirable. An audience is most likely to remember and benefit by condensed statements. Long drawn out discussions are likely to confuse and leave nothing distinctive to remember. Lack of emphasis in public address is a serious fault.

Personal attitude and appearance before an audience has much to do with the effectiveness of this form of contact in producing useful reactions. Confidence without over-assurance, boastfulness or suggestion of egotism is a very desirable quality. Evident mastery of a subject tends

to inspire confidence. Direct open frankness which invites questions usually wins the favor of an audience. The speaker's attitude must not be patronizing or superior. It should always indicate sympathy and understanding but never pity. The dress and manner of the speaker should be dignified but not affected.

The effective public speaker will also avoid antagonizing people in the audience or discussing in a partizan way argumentative questions upon which people are divided or over which they are contending. It is better to advise and exemplify mutual agreement and understanding and the necessity of working together than to take sides. A neutral conciliating attitude will put the speaker in a stronger position and make his judgment and advice more sought after. Yet the county agent should never hesitate to hold decided views on the side which he feels to be right when he has firm convictions on a subject. He should be able to do this without being offensive or stirring up antagonisms.

A public speaker should always keep cool. When he loses his temper he usually says things that he will be sorry for later on. A county agent's success depends as much on his ability to get along with people and to make friends without arousing undue antagonism, as upon any other one factor. Most county agents have enough experience and technical training to succeed. A less number have those personal qualities that command support alike from public and coworkers and which are just as essential to success as a county agent.

It is always well to avoid the use of the personal pronoun "I" as much as possible. A county agent in common with all public servants should forget his own personal interests and status and devote himself to service. He must be broad-minded, conscientious, liberal and forgetful of self. This is the best way to establish confidence in one's



leadership and to enhance his work. Seeking personal aggrandizement is likely to spoil both work and results.

### INSPIRATION AND ENTHUSIASM

Confidence in the ideals of an organization and in its leadership is of first importance. Without it little else can be accomplished. With confidence as a basis real efficiency of operation may be secured.

Confidence and efficiency are good as far as they go, but a leader who stops here falls far short of his possibilities. If he does not lead and inspire men and women to come into the organization and to want to render service themselves, he may in the end fail altogether. He must be able to develop enthusiasm for his own ideals and those of his organization. Neither confidence nor efficiency alone is sufficient to build a strong organization. Without the constant inspiration engendered by the personal enthusiasm and contacts of the leader, confidence may be lost and efficiency made impossible.

The county agent without vision or the ability to look ahead into the future and see what is likely to happen before it does happen, can never be a good leader. The outstanding leader is able to visualize future problems and to anticipate them. "Forewarned is forearmed." The ability to see a need before it arrives and to prepare a community for its coming enables the leader to perform a valuable service to the community. It is human to delay preparation to meet a need. The county agent may be very helpful in stimulating such preparation.

The enlargement of the vision of others is a part of the obligation of the county agent to render service. It is not given to every one to see all the possibilities of community life and growth, nor to anticipate the full development of

its producing capacity and the efficient marketing of its products. To help those whose vision is limited to see the larger things and generally to enlarge outlooks, is to achieve real gains which are certain to yield rich accomplishments in later years. It is a great art to be able correctly to evaluate things; not to be overwhelmed with details which only clutter up one's time, but to emphasize really important things; to leave undone the unnecessary or unimportant, and to devote one's energies to the things that really count.

Optimism is a great asset to any public worker. He must be able to see the good in things and in men. Without being blind to disagreeable facts or underestimating adverse circumstances, a county agent should have the ability to bring out the good and the worthwhile in the folks with whom he works.

Loyalty to his work and to his employers and his associates is vital. No agent should say to any one's back that which he would not say to his face. Injury to others through misrepresentation or unfair or cutting remarks does them a wrong and usually reacts upon the speaker.

#### THE PLAY SPIRIT

No county agent or community leader can carry on his work successfully unless he is able to develop a spirit of working together in the community, neighborhood and county, and nothing develops such a spirit like group play. Real play means laughter and fun. It means a feeling of freedom from restraint. "It breaks the ice." It dispels formality and stiffness and makes folks "feel at home." To confine county agent activities to the serious is to appeal only to one side of human nature and to miss a splendid opportunity to serve both the community and the work.

More and more recreation is coming to have a real place in county agent work both for its own sake and because it helps to balance community life and programs. It introduces desirable contrasts. It opens up new horizons. It encourages and even teaches coöperation. Indeed, play itself is a form of coöperation since most play requires the acting together of several or many individuals. Because it is one of the simplest and most pleasant forms of coöperation, it is an excellent way to begin the development of community spirit. This is especially true of group recreation.

Perhaps the most common and the most useful form of group recreation is community singing. Nearly everybody likes to sing, or at least to hear singing. It is surprising how under good leadership groups of people yield to the coöperative spirit aroused by simply singing together. One can almost feel the change in the atmosphere of such a meeting. When interspersed with subject-matter talks or addresses, it both promotes the serious objects of the meeting and enlivens it generally. And where coöperative action together in matters of common concern is the end desired, it may even prove to be the deciding factor.

There are some communities which need to learn to sing and to play together before they are ready for other forms of community activity. Recreation is sometimes the key which will unlock the coöperative spirit, where more serious approaches would and do fail. Children yield most readily to such an influence but it is not without its effect on adults. A community comes to mind where both an evening meeting and an extension school had failed because of bad feeling which existed over the question of the pooling of products. This community was brought to a saner view of the situation and to coöperative action through recreation activities, chiefly singing, which were accompanied by a talk by a person able to arouse commu-

nity spirit and to stimulate coöperation without getting into details which sometimes develop argument and antagonisms.

There are many simple contests, games and even physical exercises in which large groups may participate and with which most persons are familiar. They require no special skill, but do call for leadership. To best serve their purpose, they must be well done. They tend to relieve the sameness and the seriousness in meetings and to emphasize community of interest and to encourage coöperative action.

#### COMMUNITY RECREATION

In order to encourage and to increase community spirit and action, it is coming to be the practice to hold one or more county-wide gatherings in each county during the year. Such gatherings are also held in the communities, but these usually include more than one community. They are of many different types: field days, picnics, clam bakes, ox roasts, etc. All have certain features in common. They are characterized by field games and contests, usually including a ball game, by picnic dinners and by "speeches." It is surprising what such meetings sometimes accomplish in the way of developing community spirit.

Some of the possibilities of such meetings are indicated in the quotation which follows and which is taken from the report of a home demonstration agent:

"One hundred men, women and children for miles around gathered in a meadow at ————— for a corn roast and clam bake. There is no village or even a cross-roads, merely a school-house. I made a few remarks encouraging them in this getting together for play. Games occupied the rest of the P.M. One man said to me: 'You have no idea of the change in the spirit of the people of this community since the farm and home

bureau meeting here last winter. Then we did not know each other and appeared too afraid to do anything together. Now the women have home bureau meetings each month and are doing all sorts of new things. We have had socials and now this picnic. It is fine.' A few months ago a Sunday school was started and it is held in the school-house every Sunday afternoon."

Community or county-wide gatherings of this nature have long been held under other auspices than those of county agents, but they have more or less broken down in the last decade or two. They seem to have been less frequently held in many parts of the country and to have been less successful. Under the county agent's leadership they are experiencing a real revival. They should be more used than they are, as they may be of great value not only in stimulating the play spirit and recreation generally, but also in breaking down some of the barriers that often exist in communities and in opening the way to more complete coöperation. County agents will do well to make larger use of them both on the county-wide basis and on the community basis.

#### PICNICS AND FIELD DAYS

Since the important purpose of a picnic or a field day is play and rest, too many and too long speeches should be avoided. It is usually well to have at least one good address, preferably after the picnic dinner, when people are ready to relax and listen for thirty or forty minutes to an inspirational talk. Speakers on such occasions should either discuss some public problem of outstanding importance or the means of community growth and development. In other words, they should use the occasion to encourage and to stimulate community spirit.

A well-made program carefully thought out and planned

in detail and carried through to the letter is one of the first essentials of success. It is well to have several things going on at once in order to meet the requirements of different ages and the tastes of different groups. If this is done, care must be used to see that undesirable conflicts are avoided.

There will always be more or less local talent available in the county, such as song leaders, Y. M. C. A. secretaries and others who can help in the organizing and conduct of such gatherings. In some of the states specialists in rural sociology and rural organization are available at the state colleges to assist with the programs. Full responsibility should be delegated to some competent person who should be in charge of each part of the program. The county agent should not try to do it all himself, but should delegate everything possible to others. He will be busy enough seeing that all of the machinery runs smoothly.

A location must be chosen which is suitable and convenient. Such a location should be chosen with the following things in mind: Shade, drinking water, clean grounds, care of rubbish, room for sports, retiring conveniences, etc. Picnic lunches are usually best on such occasions because they throw groups of people together and tend more toward a social good time. But some provision must usually be made for those who cannot conveniently bring lunches. It is well to see that city and village people cooperate as well as farmers. Farmers alone do not often constitute a community. The best community spirit cannot be developed unless all its component groups participate.

#### RURAL DRAMATICS

The play or drama given in the rural community by local talent may be a useful means not only of developing the



Community picnics and field days should be the occasion for stimulating and encouraging the play spirit, and for emphasizing the essential unity of the people of the community as a group thinking and acting together in the common concerns of life.





play spirit, but of teaching useful lessons in working together as well. This means of arousing community spirit should be more widely used than it is. In the same way the historical or allegorical pageant has wonderful possibilities for community development. Both help to train local talent. They may also be useful in bringing about needed improvements in the community.

Many persons hesitate to undertake local plays or pageants, because they fear that they have not the necessary skill or ability to give them. One does not need to be a professionally trained actor to take part in a simple play or pageant. With a very little study and drill he can take part to his own credit and good and to the advantage of the community. Many suitable plays are available. Sometimes local talent is available to write them for the occasion. Usually helps may be secured from the State University.

#### COMMUNITY CLUBS

No means of personal and social contact is more important than that in the local grange, farmers' club, union, or other community group which meets regularly for the discussion of local problems or for recreation. This frequent meeting at regular intervals, usually in a hall of its own, is a great advantage possessed by such organizations as the grange, which as yet is not as generally enjoyed by farm bureau groups. This vital need must be remedied either by closer coöperation or by local organization of its own if the farm bureau is to function locally. Here the influence of leadership has full play. The finest of contacts may be established in such groups and the influence of personalities should be at its maximum. The alert county agent will make the most of these opportunities and see that other local leaders do also.

Efforts at community betterment which stop at a single or occasional meeting can seldom accomplish their full purpose. Large and permanent values grow out of sustained interest and continued effort. Much may be started in a single meeting. Usually, however, real accomplishment grows out of discussion over a considerable period and well considered action by the people of the community on the basis of their knowledge and desires maturely arrived at. No means serves the end of permanent achievement in community life better than the regular club or local meeting. Moreover, the effect of these meetings is cumulative.

#### SOCIAL VALUES

The social contact is invaluable. No county agent can be very efficient without it. He must know the people with whom he is working, especially the leaders, in a personal way. They must know him for his personal worth and character. Without such personal contact in a social way the value of personality is likely to be lost and this great asset of leadership dissipated. Confidence may not be established or retained if acquired. Certainly enthusiasm cannot be developed.

No county agents or local leaders ever know just how valuable even the most casual personal contact may be. So often a word of encouragement, a little information given, an opinion expressed or a suggestion carelessly dropped may prove to be the seed out of which great good grows. No influence is more potent than the continued impression of one strong personality upon another. One has only to look about him to find everywhere ample evidence of the truth of these observations.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE COUNTY AGENT'S JOB AND OPPORTUNITY

To few persons comes a bigger job and a larger opportunity for service than comes to the county agent who is alive to them. But as in other fields of service, much depends upon the use that is made of the opportunity. The county agent's job is usually what he makes it. It may be merely one of great activity in unessential details and doing things for farmers which they should do for themselves. Or, it may be the organizing of the agriculture of a county, the better training of its leadership and giving its citizenship a new vision of their responsibilities, obligations and opportunities.

#### THE SIZE OF THE JOB

If the county agent is to be to agriculture what the teacher is to the school and the pastor is to the church, then his job is fairly well outlined. He is to teach, to inform, to lead and to organize the agricultural interests of his county to the common end of "better farming, better business, better living." He is essentially concerned with the permanent welfare of the people of the county in which he works. He is expected to help to make its farming more profitable to the end that living in the homes of its communities may be more satisfying, and thus the whole public welfare served.

The county agent will find that his constituency will vary all the way from about a thousand persons living on two or three hundred farms to fifty or one hundred thousand

rural people living on ten thousand farms and in the rural communities of which they are a part. The land embraced in his school room—the county—may be from a hundred thousand to several million acres, or from a few hundred to many thousand square miles. The investment in the farming industry in a county is seldom less than a million and often runs into many millions of dollars. The annual income and outgo from the farms of the smallest county is very large, while that from the largest and most prosperous counties would rival the operations of large corporations. But it is the rural citizenship of the county that is its greatest asset and whose welfare and prosperity is the county agent's greatest concern.

If there is such a thing as an "average" county—and there is a median between the limits of the extremes just enumerated—it will be found to contain about twenty-five hundred farms with approximately twelve thousand persons living upon them. It will be about twenty miles wide and thirty miles long and will contain about three hundred thousand acres, about half improved land, and with farm property worth about twenty-five million dollars, with an annual income of approximately five millions and a purchasing power of nearly or quite the same amount. These averages vary greatly with the section of the county and the type of country as well as with the individual county. In any case it is a man-sized job, even physically and quantitatively.

When in addition one surveys the problems of the county qualitatively, studies its people, its resources and its opportunities, he will usually be tremendously impressed with the opportunities for service and the need of leadership more fully to utilize its possibilities. Of course all progress is not dependent upon the county agent. But he can stimulate local initiative, organize local forces and furnish

a "leaven" which may result in much leavening of communities.

#### NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS

It will be readily apparent that if the possibilities of a county agent's job are to be realized, and the opportunities which it offers utilized, a person possessing not only knowledge and ability but training, experience and certain personal qualities as well must be secured. Unless such a job is to be a mere office to be perfunctorily filled—in which case it is practically useless—it is no place for a politician or any other individual who is merely hunting for a job. It must not be filled by an individual because he has influence or a "pull." It is no place for an untrained farmer or an inexperienced local favorite young man.

In Chapter III we have already pointed out some of the necessary and important qualities of leadership. These apply especially to county agents. An understanding and sympathetic knowledge of farming and farmers and some practical experience in the business are almost indispensable. Some special scientific training in agriculture, including not only the productive processes of crop and animal growth, and the control of insects, diseases and other limiting factors, but also in the business management of farms and coöperative organizations, is essential. This ought to be further supplemented by training in the general fields of economics, sociology and education. While this may seem quite ideal now, the time will come when such special advanced preparation or "graduate study" will not only be sought but demanded for this exacting job.

But training and experience, essential as they are, are not in themselves sufficient qualifications for a county agent. Unless they are accompanied by those personal qualities which make men acceptable as leaders to be fol-

lowed, they may be in vain. That vague and not easily definable quality called "personality" is equally essential. It must attract, inspire confidence and be able to arouse enthusiasm. And it must have native ability and energy to begin with.

There is great variation in the different states in the exact requirements to make a candidate acceptable as a county agent. As is pointed out in Chapter VIII, experience and knowledge of local conditions has been emphasized in the Southern states rather than special training in the colleges. In the Northern and Western states the emphasis has been put upon technical training. In the South agents are as a rule older and more experienced but not so definitely trained for their jobs as in the other states. Only in isolated instances has political power or other local influence been allowed to name the agents. As a group county agents stand out as men of unusually good personalities, energy and leadership. They are doers of things and real leaders in their counties as a rule. No one who has attended state conferences of county agents can have failed to note the characteristic energetic ability of the young men usually found there.

One of the states which has from the beginning set a high standard of qualifications for county agents is Illinois. The qualifications deemed necessary there for college approval of a county agent are:

- (1) Graduation from a good agricultural college or the equivalent in educational training.

- (2) At least five years' actual residence and practical experience on a farm.

- (3) At least five years' successful experience in some line of agricultural work after attaining the required educational training.

(4) In addition to these technical requirements the candidate must be otherwise acceptable and fit for the responsibilities of a county agent.

These qualifications are ideals worthy of emulation by all the states. Unfortunately they are not always practically attainable. The supply of men with these qualifications is limited. The demand for well trained and well experienced persons in other lines, particularly in commercial concerns dealing with agricultural supplies, of coöperatives for managers and executives at higher salaries than can be paid for agents is a competition sometimes hard to meet. County committees are often confronted with the choice of accepting an agent below this standard either in training or experience or going without one. This standard should, however, be maintained wherever possible. It is likely to be raised rather than lowered, as the standards of intelligence and education among farm people increase and as the supply of trained men from the colleges becomes sufficient to meet the demands.

#### ADVANTAGES

The greatest appeal of the county agent's job to ambitious young men is the wonderful opportunity which it presents for service to agriculture. To be placed in so large an area as a county, with the active backing and help of a body of its best and most progressive farmer citizens and with the support and coöperation of the state college of agriculture and of the United States Department of Agriculture, equipped with all the necessary facilities for office and field work and with large freedom to exert one's personal influence and ability and to apply them in carrying out his ideals of service, is an opportunity such as

comes to few young men. Several thousand have accepted the challenge of this opportunity in the last few years, a few to fail, but the great majority successfully.

A large proportion of young men from the farms, especially those graduating from the agricultural colleges, naturally desire to return to the farm for a life work. Many are prevented from doing this at once by lack of capital and by debts acquired in obtaining an education. To these county agent work especially appeals not only as a means of earning money but as an opportunity for valuable experience both in public service and in farm management. A county agent has or must soon acquire the community point of view. He soon learns the need for and the value of community spirit and service. This makes him a more useful citizen later in his own community. Moreover, he has an unexcelled opportunity to come into close contact with and for observation of the methods of the best farmers in his county. If he is alert and receptive this experience may be of greater personal value to him than years of graduate study.

The salary or income advantage of county agent work is excellent. Very few agents have to begin their work at less than fifteen hundred dollars a year, and in most states assistant agents begin at this or a larger salary. Counties which pay less than \$2,000 are usually strictly rural, the county seat is a small town and rents and other living costs are proportionately low. The average county agricultural agent receives between \$2,500 and \$3,000 a year. Many county agents receive from \$3,500 to \$5,000 annually. The salaries of home demonstration and boys' and girls' club agents have about the same range with a lower upper limit and an average perhaps twenty per cent less.

Salaries are usually less in the poorer and more exclusively agricultural counties with less taxable wealth and



larger in the richer farming counties and in those with cities and hence having greater property valuations. In general, salaries of county agents are lowest in the South and highest in the Middle West and in certain wealthy Eastern counties.

The rapidity and comparative ease with which a county agent's salary can be and often is raised is an advantage. Coming as it does from several sources—federal, state and county appropriations and the fees of farmers in the county associations—there are many sources from which to obtain the necessary funds if desired. There is very little “red tape” to be complied with. Ability and success are in most cases quickly recognized and rewarded. Increases in salary depend chiefly on the county executive committees, and these men, usually deeply interested in the work and close to it, are as a rule appreciative of real service rendered and liberal in recognizing it.

During the calendar year of 1921, 511 county agricultural agents, 276 home demonstration agents and 137 boys' and girls' club agents resigned. In their places and in new and unfilled counties were appointed 639 new county agricultural, 284 new home demonstration and 109 new boys' and girls' club agents in the United States. This indicates large opportunities and frequent openings in this field of service, not difficult to win when a person prepares himself for it.

To the uninformed observer this high percentage of turnover and short term of service may seem to contradict and offset the advantages of the job just enumerated. This is not the case. A usual and inevitable percentage of appointees fail to make good, partly because they are not adapted to the job and partly from lack of sufficient preparation of the right kind. The greater part of the replacements, however, are due to the fact that the success-

ful county agent because of his broad experience and demonstrated ability is immediately in great demand by commercial or coöperative concerns dealing in farm supplies and commodities or in more advanced positions in the extension service and in related fields able to pay larger salaries. In other words, county agents' work is a great training ground for young men for the general agricultural field and is often a stepping stone to other and still more lucrative and satisfying fields of service.

#### DISADVANTAGES

Aside from its disadvantages the county agent's job is far from an easy one. It means lots of hard work and long hours. Hard work is not in itself a disadvantage, but there is a limit to the endurance of all men. When to hard work, which any healthy virile young person should welcome, is added the element of long hours, many of them at night, with duties of an exacting character, even an ambitious high-idealed youth wearies of it sooner or later. The facts show that he does.

If it is a great advantage to have the acquaintance, confidence and support of large numbers of farmers in the county, it is equally a disadvantage to have to be at their constant call when information or other help is wanted. Contact with all these individuals must be maintained in some form in order to keep the opportunity for service open and to carry forward the work. This is one of the penalties of all such public service and one which wears on most men in time. To some, of course it is less irksome than to others; but of all it exacts much time and energy.

To be constantly on the alert to do things that need to be done, to get them done, and in so doing not to offend

but to please men; to assist in formulating and carrying forward county and community programs of work; to help to build and to maintain all the necessary machinery to do the work; to inspire local leadership, create enthusiasm and keep the whole idea functioning; these are some of the responsibilities and obligations which the county agent must meet and which naturally get to be wearing. Especially when they are not appreciated by those who benefit, as is sometimes the case, is it easy to become discouraged. The job is an exacting one.

The county agent's life is a busy and a strenuous one, if he is a good agent. There is always so much to do. The more capable and successful an agent is, the heavier is the pressure on him and the greater the demand for his services. The work not only keeps him busy. It drives him. It absorbs his physical energy. Long hard drives in the "fliver" almost every day and in all kinds of weather and conditions. Many "talks" on all sorts of occasions in every part of the county call for thoughtful preparation as well as for energy and skill. Many evenings are spent away from home and midnight returns from meetings at distant points in the county are the common thing. Constant telephone calls are apt to be his lot at night as well as during the day. All these and other demands of the work call for devotion and the larger outlook if one is not to be overwhelmed by multifarious details.

#### FIRST STEPS IN COUNTY AGENT WORK

The county agent new to his county is sometimes at a loss to know where to begin—what to do first. It may be well therefore to indicate some of the most important first things to be done.

The efficient county agent will be more than a personal

worker, especially when he is supported by a strong county organization. He will have many facilities and much machinery to use in his work. His first job, therefore, should be to familiarize himself with these. He needs to know the office personnel and their fitness and adaptability for various tasks, his files, his library references, his office equipment and general facilities. This will require only a few days.

The next and equally important step is acquaintance with the field organization and personnel. This calls for visits to community committeemen and other local leaders in their homes and on their farms in order to know them personally and in their own environment, to be known by them and to plan local work with them. Such personal acquaintance is vital. Many new agents make mistakes in underestimating its value or in delaying it. Little progress can be made in any locality without that personal knowledge which affords some basis for mutual confidence and respect. An agent comes to mind who was obliged to resign after six months in his county, chiefly because he had failed to make contacts with local committeemen and could not therefore get active local coöperation. This will require more time—a month or two. Meetings and demonstrations are good helps to this end.

A third step which should be begun simultaneously with the others is the study of the county's agriculture and its problems. Every possible means should be used for this. In the office census figures, old reports and records and all other available data should be studied. Especially should a new agent familiarize himself with great care with what has been done in the county by his predecessors. All such information needs to be checked by his own observation in the county and with committeemen and farmers generally. From all possible sources the county agent should inform

himself and gather all necessary facts to help him know his problem thoroughly.

Having completed these steps, which will not usually occupy more than two to four months according to the size of the county, the county agent should have made the county program of work his own and have the plans for its development well under way. He may also have changes to suggest in the plans. It is very important that the county agent know the county program and have his plans perfected for its carrying out at the earliest possible date after his arrival in the county.

### GOALS AND IDEALS

Unless the county agent approaches his job with high and right ideals, unless he keeps always in mind the larger goals, he may succeed with details but fail of really important accomplishment. It is highly important therefore that he keep the larger objective before him.

He must believe that individuals and communities are capable of solving their own problems and act accordingly. Remembering that his own chief function is to teach better methods and practices and to assist in developing local organization and leadership as the best means of solving local problems, he must allow local people to assume responsibility and encourage them to do things for themselves. Ability for self-help is the best result of education and the soundest basis for permanent improvement.

The surest and most effective way to help men and women is to help them to help themselves. Men acquire the ability to do by doing for themselves rather than by simply being told or by having things done for them. Developed capacity and ability for self-help are permanent—the improvement goes on. If the so-called assistance is from without,

improvement is likely to stop when the outside assistance ceases. Moreover, direct aid to individuals and to groups must always be limited—only a comparative few can be effectively reached. But self-help under the incentive of wise leadership and sound organization, as well as individual initiative, is unlimited.

The county agent's job is no sinecure. It is a challenge of real opportunity to strong young men and women. The aspirant to such a job must be willing to work hard, ready to overcome all kinds of difficulties and discouragements. But above all he must have a big vision of the size and the possibilities of his field of work. To one who has such a will to win and such a vision of service, there surely comes great reward both in material personal advancement and in spiritual satisfaction.

**PART II**

***THE BACKGROUND AND THE MEANS OF  
SERVICE***





## CHAPTER VII

### THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION AND OPPORTUNITY

Too many of our people regard farming as an occupation with which they have no particular concern and merely as a matter of general interest. This all too common attitude on the part of persons not engaged in agriculture or related pursuits is a cause for grave concern to students of the problem of feeding the Nation. The great consumer public is or should be as vitally concerned with the welfare of agriculture and with the rendering of the necessary public service to farming as are the farmers themselves in having this service.

#### WHY THE PUBLIC IS INTERESTED

Because the problem of an adequate food supply at reasonable prices is probably the biggest before the Nation, a sound and efficient agriculture is a public necessity. The farms are the source of the Nation's food supply and as such must be safeguarded, conserved and developed to meet the needs of a growing population. For its own protection a nation should be self-supporting in peace as well as in war. The consumer should be interested in the maintenance of the quality of the product through protection from insects and diseases by inspection and demonstration, grading and standardization to secure uniformity, and efficient methods of marketing to preserve quality up to the time of delivery.

Moreover, an efficient and prosperous citizenship on the farms is essential to public welfare. Agriculture can be sound, permanent and efficient only when it is profitable to farmers. That this has not always been the case during the past fifty years, the strong continuing movement of population from country to city is evidence. This constant movement from farms to cities, supplemented by the natural growth of cities and by immigration chiefly to cities, has changed the ratio of one farm family to one city family in 1860 to one farm family to practically three city and village families in 1920; so that now one farmer must feed his own and two or three other families.

That the farmer has been able to do this is due in part to the great improvement and increased use of farm machinery, and in part to education and the application of an increased intelligence to his problems. But conditions in the country are not yet sufficiently attractive to hold enough of its best young men and young women there. The average age of farmers is high. We are probably due for a further recession from the farms.

Agricultural conservation, development and education are therefore matters of public concern. There is great need for more intelligent public understanding and consideration of farm problems, and for the formulation of a forward-looking constructive public agricultural policy. The county agent system can and does contribute to these ends and is therefore in the public interest. Farmers may receive the direct benefits of the county agents' work, but the general public often receives the larger if the less direct benefits.

#### THE OBLIGATION OF FARMERS

Because agriculture is of such great importance to all, the farmer himself has a peculiar obligation and responsi-

bility to the whole nation. It is vitally important that he support and coöperate with the public efforts to aid agriculture. Government cannot help the farmer unless he tries to help himself. But in a partnership with farmers much help can be given by public agencies. Such a system of coöperation between farmers and the public is essential to a permanent agriculture.

Marketing and distribution are consumers' as well as farmers' problems—no one group can solve them alone and without the support of the other. The public must come to understand and appreciate the farmer's problems and to work with him sympathetically toward their solution. More real progress has been made in the effective organization of farmers to achieve these mutually desirable ends in the last decade than in the preceding half century.

This has been made possible chiefly through the great national system of agricultural extension in which the county agent is a most important element. Through the county agent the principles of successful farming and marketing are being demonstrated. Farmers are coming physically together, are learning to know and work with one another, and to think their problems through. Local unit and commodity organizations are growing up to meet marketing problems. Common experience and common principles applied locally are leading to the uniformity which is making possible state and national organization. The county agent is contributing an educational, reasoning viewpoint and attitude toward the problems. Gradually farmers are acquiring this attitude themselves.

In a larger way and to aid and promote the great end of a sound and permanent agriculture in the interests of all, a partnership has been formed between science and practice. The colleges and experiment stations are the sources of scientific facts. Farmers must be the ones to

make practical use of these facts. Many failures in farming can be traced to unscientific principles and methods. Much that science has found out awaits application by the farmer to make it useful. The farmer cannot afford not to use to the utmost the facts science has revealed. The colleges cannot afford to be without an organized touch with practical men and affairs. The farm and home bureaus are the joint or partnership agencies which, supporting the county agent, are harnessing science and practice in an efficient team.

#### CHANGES IN AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

No attempt to describe the functions, work and opportunities of county agents and county farm bureaus would be complete unless it were fitted into the background of the situation in which the modern farmer lives and works. Therefore, in the beginning of this section, we need first to remind ourselves of the principal changes which have taken place in American agriculture in the last fifty years or more, the effect of these changes on the business of farming and on country life, and their relation to the work and opportunities of county agents.

Agriculture with all its natural stability and conservativeness has been no exception to the rule of rapid development and change which has taken place in America since the Civil War. Probably in no section of American life and industry have these changes been more profound in their influence or more disturbing in their effects. Originally a purely agricultural country with a dominant farming population, the United States has become a country of trading and manufacture as well as of farming. In spite of the fact that the business of farming has grown enormously, it necessarily has come to hold a smaller if

increasingly important place, relative to the total wealth and occupations of all our people.

### INCREASED EFFICIENCY

The total value of our agricultural products has grown from a few hundred millions in the early part of the nineteenth century to the enormous total value in 1919, of twenty-four billion seven hundred million dollars. It has more than tripled in value since 1900. In 1820 the total number of persons in the United States which had to be supplied with food from our farms was only nine million, six hundred and thirty-three thousand, eight hundred and twenty-two. By 1860 it had grown to thirty-one million, four hundred and forty-three thousand, three hundred and twenty-one persons, while in 1920, sixty years later, the number had grown to one hundred and five million, seven hundred and eight thousand, seven hundred and seventy-one.

A still more startling evidence of growth and change is the fact that while one hundred years ago but four and nine-tenths per cent of the population was urban, to-day more than one-half (51.4) of our people live in cities. Indeed, less than one-third of our workers were engaged in agricultural pursuits in 1920 as compared with eighty-seven and one-tenth per cent one hundred years before.

The situation might have been serious had not the American farmer increased his man efficiency tremendously. Dr. G. F. Warren has shown that the farmers' efforts are now fifty-nine per cent more productive than they were fifty years before. Further evidence of this can be seen in the production of cereals. In 1860 the total pounds of all kinds of grain produced by our farmers amounted to two thousand and ninety-six pounds for each person in the

country. In 1920, in spite of an increase of two hundred thirty-six per cent in population, the total pounds of grain produced per person had increased to twenty-six hundred and twenty-eight. Even the latter amount was a decrease from the high point of 1880 when the amount was twenty-eight hundred and forty-seven pounds per person. To state it another way, the rural population produced one hundred seventeen per cent more grain per worker in 1920 than in 1860.

#### OVER-PRODUCTION

This relatively great increase in agricultural production had a tremendous influence on the business of farming. Prior to the Civil War the agriculture of the country, though expanding rapidly, had been practically normal in relation to the total population. Immediately after the Civil War, however, under the stimulus of high prices, free government land and the too rapid building of railroads under government subsidies, new areas of land were opened up faster than new population needed an increased food supply, with the inevitable result of an over production of food, and hence of cheap food.

The most striking result of this condition was the beginning of a great movement from the country to the cities. Cheap food meant cheap labor and cheap material, and these two factors made possible a period of city building and of urban development which was the most remarkable characteristic of the last century in the United States and which has not yet come to an end. A better idea of just what this means is obtained when we contrast ourselves with China, where about eighty per cent of the population are engaged in food production, whereas our own system of agriculture and the efficiency of our farmers in the United States makes it possible for more than two-thirds

of our workers to engage in industry, trade and manufacture, while the other one-third produces the food to feed all.

Another and a reflex result of this condition of over production and consequent cheap food, was a falling of land values, more especially in the older East and South, where the farms had been longer settled and hence the land longer used. This went so far in some parts of the country as to cause the abandonment of much of the rougher, poorer and least productive land in these regions. Banks compelled to foreclose mortgages acquired numbers of these poorer farms. This tended to break down their confidence in the business of farming, which later had its effect in the impairment of the farmers' credit in these sections, and from which it is only now beginning to recover.

#### THE REACTION

It was of course inevitable that these conditions would eventually tend to correct themselves as they did. The opening of the twentieth century saw a gradual rise of prices which in the latter part of the last decade the world war brought to a level never before reached in the history of the United States, although the farmers' purchasing power did not show relatively as much increase. The farmer's economic situation, which had been gradually improving since the beginning of the new century, was still further ameliorated by the war prices, and he was heartened and rendered much more able to cope with his growing problems of infertility, insect and disease control and marketing and distribution.

A growing consciousness of the problem of the farms and of the public dependence upon and obligation toward agriculture was beginning to be apparent at the opening

of the century. It had already manifested itself in the establishment of a national Department of Agriculture with a Secretary of Agriculture in the President's cabinet, in the founding and permanent endowment of agricultural colleges and experiment stations in all the states, in the setting up of a rural free delivery of the mail, and in other ways. To these were added in the first decade of the new century the building of many new market roads and the beginnings of a very large development and wide extension of agricultural education.

All these developments were stimulated by the war and its effects, and together with the ever increasing application of modern inventions to farming and country life, such as the telephone, farm power machinery, especially the gasoline engine, the automobile, the truck and the farm tractor, they have brought about great changes on the American farm.

#### THE RURAL COMMUNITY

The rural community of the period before the Civil War was practically self-sustaining. Its women carded, spun and wove, cut, fitted, sewed and knitted the farm family's clothing. Its men made the needed shoes, furniture and farm implements. Its people lived and worked together in the fields, churches and schools and were able to supply the greater part of their own needs.

The rapid development of railroad transportation soon began to effect changes in rural communities. The building of great new highways and especially the coming of the automobile completed the transformation. The rural community was no longer self-sufficient and self-sustaining. Rural isolation, and unfortunately many rural ideals also,



gave way to a new social life in which the town and city were too largely the pattern. This marked the beginning of the breakdown of the small rural town and of the serious impairment of many rural institutions, notably the rural church.

#### FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

The industrial development of the period had of course been accompanied and aided by great and efficient organizations of capital and labor. The owners of capital had early acquired great power and influence as a direct result of this organization. Taking its lesson from this example and out of its necessity, labor has now developed similar power and influence through organization. But the farmer, in a similar and more difficult position, had not yet learned the lesson of the need and the remedy for it. He had his social organizations, of which the Grange or Patrons of Husbandry was perhaps the oldest and most noteworthy. He had attempted economic organization, usually without success either because of a lack of a proper appreciation of the problem and its attendant difficulties, with consequent lack of preparation along right lines, or because of attempting to remedy an economic difficulty by political means.

But out of the wreck of many commercial coöperative enterprises much experience had been gained and some solid achievements attained. The most notable of these were the coöperative grain elevators of the Middle West and the fruit marketing in California and in the Northwest. So that at the opening of the twentieth century the American farmer was just coming to a realization of his need for economic organization and of the means of attaining it. He was at the threshold of a period of organization in agriculture when the isolated individuality of the

farmer was to give way in large measure under the pressure of economic necessity, to collective organized action in matters of common concern.

#### THE OPPORTUNITY

Into this general situation in agriculture near the beginning of the second decade of the new century there came the county agent. Never was there greater need or a greater opportunity for service to farmers. The problems of production were becoming acute. There was great need for the further application of science to practice. Agricultural experiment and research institutions had accumulated much valuable information which, though available in bulletins, needed wider dissemination, demonstration and application. Instruction and demonstration of the principles of good organization as applied to marketing, and assistance in setting up marketing units was needed.

Community consciousness was beginning to stir in the minds of farmers; social and community problems were crying for attention. The need of educational leadership was never greater. Farmers had always been individualists. They were beginning to realize the necessity of common action, but needed to be shown how to accomplish it.

In short, the field was ripe for leadership such as a virile public service agency might furnish. If county agents could help to meet adequately any of these major needs, if they could be the means of assisting to work out the solution of any of these pressing problems, the success of the movement would be assured.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BEGINNINGS OF COUNTY AGENT WORK

CHARACTERISTICALLY, county agent work began with a definite project of service to farmers in a time of need. It established an ideal often forgotten, but always a first principle of successful county agent activity—service through education.

#### IN THE SOUTH

Down in the Southland a new pest of "King Cotton," known as the "boll weevil," had reached such a destructive stage by 1903 and 1904 in certain areas of East Texas, where cultural methods were far from good, that it threatened the very existence of several communities. The cotton crop, which was the main income producer here, was so reduced as seriously to affect the farmer's credit and his buying power. So the business of many small rural towns was drying up. In this emergency Congress was appealed to and an appropriation was secured. With this appropriation and under the direction of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp in the Department of Agriculture an effort was begun to control the boll weevil.

So far there was nothing new in the undertaking. Similar troubles had occurred before. Appropriations by Congress were a common but not always a sure remedy. It was the methods employed by Doctor Knapp that proved to be epochal.

Working in coöperation with the Department's trained scientists in the Bureaus of Plant Industry and Entomol-

ogy, Doctor Knapp soon learned that certain better cultural methods, properly carried out, would measurably control the new pest even if it did not eradicate it. By burning old stalks, by early planting of early varieties with better seed, by better preparation of the seed bed, by more thorough cultivation of the crop, by agitation of the stalks, and by other means, the injury done by the weevil could be reduced to the minimum necessary to produce a living return. How to convince farmers of this and how to get these practices generally adopted was the real problem. That the pest could at least be measurably controlled had already been demonstrated on a few selected farms by federal agents who knew what could be done. But these were limited in their influence on the practices of neighboring farmers. To convince the majority of the cotton planters of the value of the practices advocated was the task to which Doctor Knapp resolutely set himself.<sup>1</sup>

#### LOCAL COÖPERATION ENLISTED

Beginning with the most progressive citizens, mostly townspeople who owned and rented out their land to negro and other tenants—including besides a few leading farmers, merchants, bankers, lawyers and teachers—the coöperation of the cotton planters was enlisted. The new methods were preached up and down the land, by word of mouth and in the newspapers. It was not difficult to get town coöperation, for farm buying power had been seriously depleted and the merchants grasped at any promising straw.

To aid in securing local coöperation from the farmers themselves, Doctor Knapp established districts with local agents in charge, the district agents being lieutenants for

<sup>1</sup> The first county agent in the South was W. C. Stallings in Smith Co., Texas.

the state agents. These local agents were preferably and usually local farmers "in good repute with the people" who had been practically successful with the control methods advocated by the Department, and who had local knowledge of the problems and the methods of the people with whom they worked. They traveled from farm to farm and gave personal instruction to farmers who by actual demonstrations showed that cotton could be profitably grown in spite of the weevil.

The farmers on these supervised farms were known as "demonstrators." In addition to these the local agents secured the coöperation of other cotton growers in the neighborhood who under their general suggestions also practiced control measures. These latter were known as "coöperators." The difference between the "demonstrator" and the "coöperator" was that the latter was not personally visited on his farm, although he was invited to visit his neighboring demonstrator to receive the same personal instruction from the demonstrator. Both received the same instructions and made the same reports.

In spite of the handicap of negro and "poor white" tenantry, these local demonstration methods were so successfully used that by 1906 a reasonable control of the boll weevil had been obtained in the limited areas worked in. Then there began to be demands for the application of the plan in other areas and in other states, and it was soon extended to parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama and Tennessee, everywhere with a considerable degree of success.

Not only was application of the method extended to new areas, but it was applied to new crops and to new practices. New crops, particularly corn and legumes, were introduced and their growth and culture demonstrated. Crop rotations, humus, its value, and how to get it and keep it,

drainage, farm accounts, and the greater use of livestock, all these and other things were successfully taught by the "show me" method.

As a matter of fact, when Doctor Knapp attempted to demonstrate better cultural methods in the Southeastern states, particularly in Georgia, he found the cultural practices of farmers there far in advance of those in Texas and in many localities even as good as his own demonstrations there. Since the weevil had not then reached this territory the demonstration work became a matter of preparation for its coming. This preparation took the form of efforts to diversify the farming of these states. The early work was chiefly one-acre demonstrations of corn growing with boys, which was followed by the introduction of hogs and cattle. Much good was accomplished, the fuller results being harvested with the coming of the weevil.

#### EXTENT OF EARLY DEVELOPMENT

It is estimated that there were in 1904 about fifteen agents engaged in this work and about twenty agents in 1905 with from four to six thousand persons enrolled. In 1906 under the term "cotton culture farms," there were about twenty-five agents doing demonstration work in parts of the five states mentioned above. Approximately eight thousand persons were coöperating at that time. Three hundred and fifty-nine farms were secured and placed under the full supervision of the agents for the purpose of securing special results. By the end of 1913 the number of agents in the thirteen Southern states had increased to eight hundred and seventy-eight and the number of demonstrators and coöperators to one hundred two thousand seven hundred and eighteen. Beginning in 1909 these agents also carried on demonstration work with women and

boys and girls, and it was not differentiated into separate lines with special agents in charge until 1914. This part of the story is left for later consideration.

Teaching by showing and with local coöperation proved to be so successful that by 1914, when the Smith-Lever Extension Act was passed and county agent work inaugurated throughout the whole country, the farm demonstration movement had spread to all the thirteen Southern states. To this southern group the states of West Virginia and Kentucky were later added, and this made the Division of Extension Work, South.<sup>1</sup> Because the county was recognized as a local political unit with a local appropriating body, the demonstration work was soon organized on a county basis and the agents were called "county agents."

Financial coöperation on the part of the counties was begun in 1909 when Mississippi passed a law authorizing its county commissioners to appropriate funds for the support of county agents. Up to this time the greater part of the cash cost of the work had been paid from Congressional appropriations supplemented by gifts from the General Education Board and by some local contributions from Chambers of Commerce, banks and individuals.

In 1911 the first coöperative relations were established in the states. In this year the federal Department made an agreement with the South Carolina and this marked the beginning of the influence of the colleges of agriculture in the South upon the county agent movement. From this time on with increasing county and state financial aid and under the Smith-Lever Act, the localities came to have a larger part in the organization, conduct and control of the county agent work in the South.

<sup>1</sup> Combined with "North & West" in 1922.

## IN THE NORTH AND WEST

In the states outside the cotton belt the county agent movement had a later and somewhat different origin, although the general idea of practical field demonstrations directly on the farms, adapted from the South, was the same.

In the majority of the states in the North and West the nature, status and comparative wealth of the agricultural population had created different problems which necessitated a somewhat different method of attack. Particularly in the Middle Western states and in parts of the Eastern and the far Western states, farming was generally more advanced and better diversified and developed. The type of farming was more permanent, a greater proportion of the farmers owning and living on their farms. The complication of negro tenantry was absent. The problems were special ones, among which the economic aspects, particularly efficiency in production to lower costs and marketing and distribution, were most urgently in need of solution. Livestock and fertility problems loomed large. There was as much or more to be done, but it required a different organization and a different approach to accomplish results. A larger amount of self-help was essential and the resources of farmers had to be organized to bear upon these problems.

## EARLY ATTEMPTS NOT SUCCESSFUL

It was under the direction of Professor W. J. Spillman, then chief of the Office of Farm Management, that the so-called "farm management field studies and demonstrations" were carried on in the first decade of the new century. A few men with large districts, usually, comprising



several states, were visiting and observing the practices of the best farmers in several regions, and then by writing these up for publication<sup>1</sup> and by conducting field excursions to visit these best farms, and sometimes by actual demonstrations, they were endeavoring, in an inadequate way, to apply the method so successful in the South to Northern and Western conditions.

The policy and the tendency in this work was always to localize it by taking on additional men as fast as the funds would permit. In 1908, for example, the writer became an assistant to Lawrence G. Dodge, who had for several years been carrying on this type of work in the New England states and in New York and Pennsylvania. The writer gave practically all his time to New York state. In 1909 Mr. George Monroe of Dryden, N. Y., began for the Bureau of Soils some demonstrations on some so-called "abandoned farms" in the hill country of Tompkins County, N. Y., looking toward their rejuvenation with lime and clover. In the summer of 1910 three other practical farmers, Mr. E. C. Gillette in Yates and Steuben Counties, Mr. D. P. Witter in Tioga County, and Mr. George Hinman in Broome County, were employed by the federal government, under the writer's direction, to carry on demonstrations with farmers in this territory. About the same time Mr. A. B. Ross, who was working independently in the farming section near Schnellsburg, Bedford County, Pa., was put on the government payroll for the same purpose.

None of this work was permanent. Little, if any, local support was enlisted, and while no doubt much good was done in individual cases, its chief value was that it did throw light on the general problem. Similar isolated and

<sup>1</sup> For examples, see Bureau Plant Industry Circular No. 64, "Agricultural Conditions in Southern New York," and Bulletin No. 32 of the same Bureau, "An Example of Successful Farming in Southern New York."

mostly unsuccessful attempts to apply the Southern plan in the North were made elsewhere at about the same time. The most notable of these was in Ohio, where at one time, according to W. A. Lloyd, "more than four thousand co-operative experiments were carried on."

#### BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

It was in Broome County, at Binghamton, N. Y., on March 1, 1911, that the first county agent in the Northern and Western states was permanently established; and this was by the Chamber of Commerce. During the summer of 1910, partly as a result of the report of the Country Life Commission, of which L. H. Bailey was chairman, and partly aroused by a visit of the then Secretary of Agriculture, James Wilson, to inspect some of the work above referred to, and who were impressed by the number of the apparently "abandoned farms" on the hills of Southern New York, Byers H. Gitchell, then Secretary of the Binghamton Chamber of Agriculture, began the agitation for a "farm bureau," or department of the Chamber, as a means of "extending to farmers the same opportunities for co-operation now enjoyed by the business men of this city."

The idea was aided and encouraged by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, which had planned a demonstration farm along its lines but which, on the advice of W. J. Spillman, gave up the plan and joined with the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce in the employment of a permanent resident county agent in Broome County. This railroad, due largely to the influence of its former general traffic manager, George A. Cullen, continued to aid this and other bureaus in New York state with its contributions and support up to 1920. Following a summer's study and survey of the situation by all the parties inter-

ested in the plan, including representatives of the State College and the Federal Department of Agriculture, an agreement was reached whereby the work was to be jointly financed by the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The State College of Agriculture, unable to contribute financially, was to "give advice and encouragement." The object of the plan as set forth in the formal memoranda was stated to be:

"To undertake propaganda work in the agricultural district in the vicinity of Binghamton, N. Y., to make an agricultural survey of the territory, study the farmers' problems, find their solution by a study of the practices of successful farmers, study the relation of types of farming to local conditions of soil, climate, markets, etc., demonstrate systems of farming used by successful farmers of the district, and conduct demonstrations with farmers, do educational work through the media of institutes, etc., advising with the farmers individually and otherwise as to the best methods, crops, cropping systems, stock, labor, tools and other equipment."

So with these worthy objects in view, in the spring of 1911, John H. Barron, farm reared, and a graduate of his State College of Agriculture, was established with an office in the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce as the first locally employed county agent in the Northern and Western states. The first year his only means of getting about was a livery horse and buggy, but this was soon succeeded by the all but universal county agent's Ford.

Though the program was ambitious, the results were not startling. Farmers were more or less indifferent. They felt that something was being done for them—some thought to them—in which they had little or no part. Their experience was that railroads and business men usually had

some selfish object of their own in fostering such movements. They couldn't imagine such organizations absolutely unselfishly "helping the farmer"; and they felt, moreover, that they didn't need this kind of help. As indicated in the statement of objects, the movement was from the outside, and though with the best of intent just another attempt of the city man to help the farmer raise more food for the consumer. It soon developed that the farmer was more interested in getting more money for what he did raise. Had not the agent been of a very practical turn of mind, a farm-reared boy who knew farmers, and a member of that old and worthy farmers' organization—the Grange—the effort must certainly have failed. As it was farmers—except a few of the most successful men—more or less disinterestedly tolerated it.

#### THE MOVEMENT SPREADS

Meanwhile two more agents had been added to counties in New York, G. P. Scoville in Chemung on April 1, 1912, and F. E. Robertson in Jefferson on April 14, 1912. Other counties in New York followed in rapid succession, until on January 1, 1914, there were nineteen agents at work in this state.

This was typical of events in several states. In Missouri, Sam Jordan began work in Pettis County in April, 1912, under the auspices of the "Boosters' Club." About a year later he was appointed as a county agent by the Missouri College of Agriculture and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. C. W. McWilliams was officially appointed county agent in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri, in August, 1912. During the same year a "Better Farming Association" was organized in Bottineau County, North Dakota, by a group of bankers with Thomas Cooper, now Dean of



John H. Barron, the first county agent in the Northern and Western States, and James Quinn, the first county farm bureau president, on Mr. Quinn's farm at Binghamton, Broome County, N. Y. The application of lime for the improvement of hill pastures was one of the earliest and most useful demonstrations in this territory.



A county club leader pointing out to the club members the good points of a dairy calf owned by one of their number. The completion of the project, whether it be rearing a dairy calf to maturity or growing a crop, together with the securing and accounting for the results, is a first essential to good boys' and girls' club work.



the Kentucky College of Agriculture as secretary. M. B. Johnson was selected as county agent. This was before federal funds were available. Later, Mr. Johnson was appointed a county agent by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and is said to be the third agent so appointed in the Northern and Western states. Since the first two, John Barron of Broome County, New York, and A. B. Ross of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, have resigned to accept other positions, and since Mr. M. B. Johnson is still employed as a county agent, though now in McKenzie County, North Dakota, it is claimed that he is really the "senior county agent in the United States" in point of service. In Illinois two county agents were appointed on June 1, 1912: Mr. W. G. Eckhardt in DeKalb County, and Mr. John Collier in Kankakee County.

During 1912 and 1913, agents were also appointed in counties in several other states, including Vermont, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Indiana. In August, 1912, the first specific appropriation by the federal government was made available for county agent work in the North and West. During the year ending June 30, 1913, about one hundred agents were appointed in as many counties in the thirty-three Northern and Western states. These appointments fully launched the movement in this section of the United States.

#### PUBLIC RECOGNITION

The state legislature in several states now recognized the movement by authorizing their county Boards of Supervisors, County Courts, or County Commissioners, as they are variously called, to levy money for "farm development" and for the "support and maintenance of county farm bureaus." North Dakota and New York were among the first of states to pass such laws, which they did in 1912.

KIND AND NUMBER OF EXTENSION WORKERS, 1917-1922

Kind of agent.	July 1, 1917.	July 1, 1918.	Jan. 1, 1919.	July 1, 1919.	Jan. 1, 1920.	July 1, 1920.	Jan. 1, 1921.	July 1, 1921.	Dec. 1, 1921.
<b>COUNTY AGENT WORK</b>									
<i>United States.</i>									
Directors and State leaders . . . . .	62	63	57	62	60	60	60	59	58
Assistant State leaders . . . . .	80	283	164	157	147	127	125	123	130
County agents and assistants . . . . .	1,451	2,513	2,405	2,412	2,024	2,014	1,996	2,085	2,100
Local agents (colored) . . . . .	66	142	148	177	151	158	157	154	148
Total . . . . .	1,659	3,001	2,774	2,808	2,382	2,359	2,338	2,421	2,436
<b>HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK.</b>									
<i>South.</i>									
State leaders . . . . .	13	14	15	13	15	15	15	15	14
Assistant State leaders and district agents . . . . .	33	57	77	82	73	77	71	73	67
County agents . . . . .	513	883	722	763	596	564	508	483	485
Local agents (colored) . . . . .	7	175	134	250	51	74	67	84	75
City agents . . . . .	.....	83	64	50	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
City agents (colored) . . . . .	.....	19	15	7	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total . . . . .	566	1,231	1,027	1,165	735	730	661	655	641



*KIND AND NUMBER OF EXTENSION WORKERS, 1917-1922—Continued*

Kind of agent.	July 1, 1917.	July 1, 1918.	Jan. 1, 1919.	July 1, 1919.	Jan. 1, 1920.	July 1, 1920.	Jan. 1, 1921.	July 1, 1921.	Dec. 1, 1921.
<i>North and West.</i>									
State leaders.....	7	47	34	34	29	28	28	30	31
Assistant State leaders.....	.....	47	47	41	43	29	23	19	25
County agents.....	20	602	462	433	214	242	245	242	243
City agents.....	.....	107	109	101	11	10	11	13	3
Total.....	27	803	652	609	297	309	307	304	302
<i>United States.</i>									
State leaders.....	20	61	49	47	44	43	43	45	45
Assistant State leaders and district agents.....	33	104	124	123	116	106	94	92	92
County agents.....	533	1,485	1,184	1,196	810	806	753	725	728
Local agents (colored).....	7	175	134	250	51	74	67	84	75
City agents.....	.....	190	173	151	11	10	11	13	3
City agents (colored).....	.....	19	15	7	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total.....	593	2,034	1,679	1,774	1,032	1,039	968	959	943
<i>BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB WORK.</i>									
<i>South.</i>									
State leaders.....	24	18	21	41	32	40	34	36	31
Assistant State leaders.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
County leaders.....	31	67	44	64	21	37	26	38	27
Total.....	55	85	65	105	53	77	60	74	58

KIND AND NUMBER OF EXTENSION WORKERS, 1917-1922—Continued

Kind of agent.	July 1, 1917.	July 1, 1918.	Jan. 1, 1919.	July 1, 1919.	Jan. 1, 1920.	July 1, 1920.	Jan. 1, 1921.	July 1, 1921.	Dec. 1, 1921.
<i>North and West.</i>									
State leaders.....	30	27	29	23	28	26	28	25	29
Assistant State leaders.....	33	134	95	89	73	66	58	58	60
County leaders.....	130	935	256	469	230	273	213	170	153
Total.....	193	1,096	380	581	331	365	299	253	242
<i>United States.</i>									
State leaders.....	54	45	50	64	60	66	62	61	60
Assistant State leaders.....	33	134	95	89	73	66	58	58	60
County leaders.....	161	1,002	300	533	251	310	239	208	180
Total.....	248	1,181	445	686	384	442	359	327	300
SUMMARY OF TOTAL.									
County agent work.....	1,659	3,001	2,774	2,808	2,382	2,359	2,338	2,421	2,436
Home demonstration work.....	593	2,034	1,679	1,774	1,032	1,039	968	959	943
Boys' and girls' club work.....	248	1,181	445	686	384	442	359	327	300
Grand total.....	2,500	6,216	4,898	5,268	3,798	3,840	3,665	3,707	3,679

U. S. Department Circular 203, Statistics of Coöperative Extension Work.

# NUMBER OF COUNTIES WITH AGENTS

State.	Agricultural counties	Counties with men agents.								Counties with women agents.							
		July 1, 1914.	July 1, 1915.	July 1, 1916.	July 1, 1917.	July 1, 1918.	July 1, 1919.	July 1, 1920.	July 1, 1921.	July 1, 1914.	July 1, 1915.	July 1, 1916.	July 1, 1917.	July 1, 1918.	July 1, 1919.	July 1, 1920.	July 1, 1921.
Alabama.....	67	67	67	65	62	66	65	55	55	18	19	27	28	67	54	32	36
Arizona.....	14	...	3	6	7	11	11	10	9	...	...	...	...	3	6	6	8
Arkansas.....	75	45	52	53	61	68	66	58	44	15	20	31	47	65	58	42	34
California.....	45	4	11	13	17	33	35	35	37	...	...	...	...	24	8	10	10
Colorado.....	63	13	13	19	16	29	27	24	25	...	...	2	...	7	3	2	1
Connecticut.....	8	1	6	7	8	8	8	8	8	...	...	...	5	8	6	6	3
Delaware.....	3	...	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	...	...	...	1	3	2	...	...
Florida.....	54	25	36	33	37	53	47	32	31	24	27	28	35	54	42	29	28
Georgia.....	152	80	81	83	117	120	134	97	85	29	48	45	57	125	93	66	66
Idaho.....	44	2	3	7	11	27	32	34	32	...	...	...	...	24	4	5	5
Illinois.....	102	14	18	20	22	53	63	81	89	...	...	1	...	88	17	11	11
Indiana.....	92	27	31	32	40	83	76	68	84	...	...	...	...	22	8	5	3
Iowa.....	99	9	11	16	26	97	99	99	99	...	...	...	...	96	23	19	21
Kansas.....	105	9	39	56	53	67	53	51	59	...	...	...	...	14	8	9	7
Kentucky.....	120	28	39	47	45	90	71	53	61	9	19	24	27	96	74	18	19
Louisiana.....	64	41	43	43	42	58	55	41	38	13	13	18	20	33	32	24	25
Maine.....	16	...	3	4	9	16	16	16	16	5	6	...	...	14	2	5	10
Maryland.....	24	8	13	16	23	22	23	22	23	...	...	10	13	22	23	21	17
Massachusetts.....	14	1	10	9	11	13	13	11	11	...	...	1	6	12	10	9	9
Michigan.....	84	11	17	22	30	71	63	60	60	...	...	1	1	24	13	12	10
Minnesota.....	86	27	23	19	16	85	86	82	83	...	...	...	...	39	8	8	7
Mississippi.....	81	48	49	44	53	79	75	71	50	33	33	32	49	71	64	53	35
Missouri.....	115	13	15	14	15	71	52	47	59	...	...	...	...	48	20	11	14
Montana.....	51	4	8	7	12	23	24	27	28	...	...	...	...	18	11	9	7
Nebraska.....	93	5	8	9	8	79	54	39	46	...	...	...	2	30	10	7	7

NUMBER OF COUNTIES WITH AGENTS—Continued

State.	Agricultural counties	Counties with men agents.								Counties with women agents.							
		July 1, 1914.	July 1, 1915.	July 1, 1916.	July 1, 1917.	July 1, 1918.	July 1, 1919.	July 1, 1920.	July 1, 1921.	July 1, 1914.	July 1, 1915.	July 1, 1916.	July 1, 1917.	July 1, 1918.	July 1, 1919.	July 1, 1920.	July 1, 1921.
Nevada.....	17	...	...	...	6	8	4	6	8	...	...	1	...	10	5	5	6
New Hampshire.....	10	1	5	8	9	10	10	9	10	...	...	...	2	9	6	3	5
New Jersey.....	21	4	7	11	10	17	18	18	19	...	...	1	...	8	5	8	7
New Mexico.....	26	...	8	9	11	25	26	22	19	...	...	...	...	11	5	4	4
New York.....	57	25	29	36	41	56	55	55	55	...	...	1	3	38	24	22	28
North Carolina.....	100	51	64	65	69	91	87	77	59	27	34	44	48	72	66	59	47
North Dakota.....	51	17	15	15	17	38	32	28	36	...	...	...	2	33	5	4	2
Ohio.....	88	8	10	12	20	63	65	63	79	...	...	1	...	13	5	2	7
Oklahoma.....	77	40	56	59	62	77	70	73	71	19	24	22	23	50	46	40	36
Oregon.....	36	10	12	13	14	24	23	26	26	...	...	...	...	15	5	5	6
Pennsylvania.....	67	10	14	22	45	53	40	54	62	...	...	1	...	48	...	...	...
Rhode Island.....	5	...	...	4	4	5	4	4	4	...	...	...	...	4	...	2	3
South Carolina.....	45	43	43	42	40	43	45	45	42	21	24	31	36	44	45	45	36
South Dakota.....	66	3	5	11	13	59	36	39	41	...	...	...	...	42	3	3	1
Tennessee.....	95	36	38	48	57	91	76	45	38	18	24	31	49	94	77	41	26
Texas.....	250	98	99	90	92	178	168	127	128	26	27	38	31	67	69	55	38
Utah.....	29	8	10	8	15	28	22	21	18	...	...	2	2	14	4	6	3
Vermont.....	14	7	9	11	13	13	13	12	13	...	...	...	...	7	5	4	6
Virginia.....	100	53	55	51	53	75	71	57	61	17	22	25	38	52	36	28	23
Washington.....	39	7	10	13	22	34	29	32	29	...	...	...	...	22	6	8	7
West Virginia.....	55	13	27	29	45	48	48	40	31	5	10	12	12	33	22	12	8
Wisconsin.....	71	9	12	13	22	59	41	42	47	...	...	...	...	17	4	2	1
Wyoming.....	21	3	6	8	13	15	13	14	15	...	...	...	...	5	7	7	6
Total.....	3,011	928	1,136	1,225	1,436	2,435	2,247	2,033	2,046	279	350	430	537	1,715	1,049	784	699

U. S. Department Circular 203, Statistics of Coöperative Extension Work.

Other states soon followed, and the next year several states still further recognized the county agent work by making available state appropriations for its support. These included New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Missouri, and New York. Indiana had made funds available through its state college for this purpose as early as 1911.

In addition to this public recognition and aid to county agent work, the support received from private sources had much to do with the successful launching of the movement at this time. Without doubt, the movement would have been much slower in getting started had it not been for the encouragement and financial support of Chambers of Commerce and certain railroads. Chambers of Commerce saw an opportunity to develop their rural territory and some of them made the mistake of attempting to control and to make the work a part of their own organization, which handicapped both them and it. Railroad corporations became interested in the movement as a means of stimulating agricultural development along their lines. In this the Lackawanna and the New York Central systems in the East and the Great Northern Lines in the West were the leaders. Philanthropists also became interested in the movement. Julius Rosenwald of Chicago, through the Council of Grain Exchanges, made available one hundred thousand dollars, at the rate of one thousand dollars per county for the first one hundred counties to organize. This offer, in connection with the local enterprise of Chambers of Commerce, was undoubtedly no small incentive in securing the appointment of agents in many counties.

Federal aid was made definite and the government fully and permanently committed to the support of the movement in coöperation with the states by the passage of the Smith-Lever Act by the Congress in 1914. Briefly the object of this act is "to disseminate useful and practical infor-

mation on agriculture and home economics and to encourage the application of the same." This is accomplished by the appropriation of considerable sums of money to be duplicated by the states, and expended and administered through the state agricultural colleges. Although not specifically so stated—and wisely as it has turned out—it was undoubtedly the intent of Congress that the greater part of this money would be used in the support and maintenance of county agents. This act, with the accompanying state legislation, made permanent the county agent plan and system and guaranteed its future, as far as government can accomplish this (see Chapter X).

#### FARMERS TAKE A HAND

Up to this point, as has already been pointed out, the county agent system was an overhead outside agency chiefly promoted by urban and government interests. This fact was recognized by many state leaders and organizers of the work, who also realized that the movement could not be permanently successful nor reach its maximum of usefulness, unless farmers had a larger share in its management and at least partial responsibility for it. No sooner was a realization of this fact borne home upon those in charge in the states than steps were taken to correct it.

In New York,<sup>1</sup> in Illinois and in Iowa, as early as the summer of 1913, the organization of county associations of farmers, variously known as county Farm Improvement, Soil Improvement, Better Farming and Farm Bureau Associations, was begun on a paid membership basis. In the beginning practically the sole object of these associations was to coöperate with the public agencies in the support

<sup>1</sup> The Broome County Farm Improvement Association was organized on Oct. 10, 1913; the Chemung County Farm Bureau Association on Aug. 29, 1913.

and management of the work of county agents. At this time this idea of coöperation or partnership with farmers, in the management of county agent work, received little or no support in most of the other states, or at the federal headquarters' office at Washington, indeed, little attention was paid to it. But gradually, as it proved itself and as considerable numbers of farmers came to have a definite interest in and to give definite support to county agent work through their associations, the interest in the idea increased, and it spread rapidly to many other states in the North and West.

Thereafter, county associations of farmers multiplied, and some states even required their organization in new counties before they would coöperate in the employment of a county agent. This plan developed some of the strongest county associations and programs of work. These county associations soon came to be known as "farm bureaus," and were officially recognized as "the county group of farmers coöperating with the college and the Department of Agriculture in carrying on county agent work." In some of the states these organizations and their functions were formally recognized by law as "public county associations."

Not until these coöperating county organizations were well established, and generally accepted officially as local coöperating institutions, could it be said that the county agent system was successfully and permanently inaugurated in the Northern and the Western states. Its future was then guaranteed by farmers as well as by government legislation.

#### BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB WORK IN THE SOUTH

No sooner was the farm demonstration work well started in the South than Doctor Knapp saw the possibilities of

utilizing the boys to demonstrate that the South could grow large yields of corn per acre, and thus promote the diversification program. He began with corn clubs, organizing his junior demonstrators in groups so as to conserve the county agents' time. The clubs were used "to instruct boys in practical agriculture on the farm" by requiring each boy to grow a full acre of corn, keep cost records and write up his work, as well as exhibit it. The general basis of award was: Yield, 30 per cent; showing of profit, 30 per cent; history, 20 per cent, and exhibit, 20 per cent.

The first boys' club was organized in Holmes County, Miss., in 1907. By 1910 the enrolment of boys had become large in several of the states (in twelve Southern states it totaled 46,225) and began to attract public attention. Many boys made more than one hundred bushels of corn per acre. Badges of merit and other insignia were awarded. Encampments were held at fairs. Scholarships in agricultural colleges, trips to colleges and to Washington, pigs, calves and many other things were offered as prizes. Corn clubs led naturally to pig clubs and these also grew apace.

Of the work, Doctor Knapp said that it

"may be regarded as a method of increasing farm crops . . . or it may be considered a system of education for boys and adults by which a readjustment of country life can be effected and placed on a higher plane of profit, comfort, culture, influence and power."

#### GIRLS' CLUBS

The next step was the organization of similar clubs for the girls. It began in 1910 in Virginia and South Carolina with garden clubs. Tomatoes were a favorite crop. The crop grown, the canning club was organized to take care of it. Later, sewing, cooking and bread clubs were



added. Poultry clubs were popular. Nutrition clubs are the latest and most progressive addition to the club groups. The same general plans and ideals that governed the boys' club work were applied to the girls' clubs and with equal success.

The growth of the work has surprised even its sponsors. A few figures will suggest its extent. In 1918, a war year, there were established in fifteen Southern states 9,026 girls' clubs with a total membership of 286,278. They cultivated 77,264 one-tenth acre plots, put up 6,629,590 containers of vegetables; 65,734 containers of fruits; 54,128 cans of meats; 42,751 containers of pimentoes; 62,342 cans of relish and chutney and many other similar products. The sewing clubs turned out 39,175 caps and aprons, 7,711 dresses and 64,220 miscellaneous articles, such as towels, laundry bags and holders.

But the great result was the training of so many boys and girls to do useful things, and the encouragement and stimulus to them to go to school and college, which many of them did.

All of this work with boys and girls in the South was carried on by the county agricultural and home demonstration agents. So popular and productive was it that in some counties the agents gave over practically all of their time to it. But as this resulted in a neglect of the work with adults, and as its popularity waned somewhat after the war, there is now a tendency toward better balance. A county agricultural agent in the South is not supposed to—and probably on an average does not—give more than fifty per cent of his time to boys' clubs. Home demonstration agents expend up to sixty per cent of their time and effort with girls' club work.

## EXTENT OF CLUB WORK

The figures which follow will give some idea of the extent and development of the work with boys and girls in the South up to the beginning of the war period in 1917. The records do not show separate figures for the boys in clubs until 1909, and for girls' club enrolments until 1911. Nor is the number of special agents for boys' and girls' work differentiated from those doing adult work until 1914:

GROWTH OF BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB WORK

	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
No. of boys' and girls' club agents	....	....	....	....	....	(1) 379	(2) 387	(3) 455
Enrolments in boys' clubs	10,543	46,225	54,362	65,376	91,196	53,380	62,842	75,605
Enrolments in girls' clubs	....	....	3,153	20,300	33,060	33,175	45,581	53,507

(1) Agents for "boys' and girls' clubs."

(2) Agents for "girls' clubs"; 842 other agents listed as working with "adult and boys' clubs," in 1915.

(3) Agents for "women and girls' work"; 886 other agents listed as working with "adult and boys' clubs," in 1916.

## CLUB WORK IN THE NORTH AND WEST

Boys' and girls' club work really had its inception in the Middle Western States where a few district school superintendents undertook to develop the idea as early as 1900. It was then primarily a contest in the growing of crops and poultry. The state colleges of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio took it up a few years later and corn growing, home gardening, poultry raising and milk testing by boys and girls became a popular form of extension work in these states. After a time, however, interest in the work waned.

It was from this early work that Doctor Knapp got his suggestion for similar work in the South.

It was not until after the passage of the Smith-Lever Act that club work in the Northern and Western states was really begun extensively throughout the territory. Three states were coöperating in 1911-12, and only six during the following year. The Lever Act, together with the emergency appropriations during the war, gave the club work its greatest impetus. Beginning with eight county leaders in 1913-14, the number rose slowly to one hundred and eighty in 1917, at the time of the United States' entrance into the war, to the high point of nine hundred and thirty-five on July 1, 1918. Since then the number has fallen away to one hundred and forty-eight county leaders in 1920, largely because of its emergency character and the fact that it was supported chiefly by federal appropriations and not made a part of the local county extension program.

The total enrolment of boys and girls in the club work in these thirty-three states in 1920 was 216,479 in 13,897 organized clubs. Only 31.8 per cent of this enrolment was secured by paid county club leaders, however. Two-thirds of it was enrolled by county agricultural and home demonstration agents and by voluntary local leaders. In all there were 1,403 of these voluntary local club project leaders, 48.5 per cent were in counties having paid county club leadership. Although such a large proportion of the enrolment was outside of the counties with regular club leaders, much more work was accomplished in counties with leaders.

#### THE PROGRAM

The program of work in the Northern and Western group of states is not unlike that in the South, with organized club demonstrations with crops such as corn, sugar beets, pota-

toes and garden, with animals, such as pig, calf, baby beef, sheep and poultry, with canning, bread making, meal preparation, clothing and handicraft for the girls, and with hot school lunches, and many others. Miscellaneous items are not taken up. The bushels of crops grown and the animals raised run into large figures just as they do in the South.

On the whole, the club programs of work are probably rather more definite and more closely supervised and give more consideration to the education of the children and less to using them to effect rural improvements. The percentage of the original enrolment completing the projects is somewhat larger, and from this standpoint the work is more satisfactory.

The question of the relation of the club work to the schools and to the Smith-Hughes work is an important one. This was discussed in Chapter II.

#### HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS

Apparently, Doctor Knapp had the possibilities of demonstration work in the homes with adult women in mind from the first. He once spoke of it as the logical "third step in advance." Beginning with a specific and pressing problem with the men, he developed demonstration work to the point where he saw its limitations as well as its successes. He then saw the opportunity to improve farm conditions through the next generation—the boys and girls—and at the same time to educate them broadly. But all the time he had a still larger, deeper purpose which he once expressed in the following language:

"The home eventually controls the viewpoint of a man; and you may do all that you are a mind to in schools, but unless you reach in and get hold of that home and change its condi-

tions you are nullifying the uplift of the school. We are reaching for the home."

As far as records seem to indicate, the home demonstration work got under way in the South in a small way about 1913. The first girls were enrolled in clubs in 1911 as we have seen. In 1915 the enrolment of 6,852 women is also recorded. The number of women enrolled in 1916 was 15,455, and in 1917, 54,601; but no separate listing of home demonstration agents occurs until 1917, when the number is given as 566 agents for "women and girls' work." There were, however, women agents working with girls' clubs as early as 1910 and with adult women by 1915.

The home demonstration work was really an expansion and enlargement of the girls' club work, just as both girls' and boys' clubs were an expansion of the original demonstration idea. As the boys' clubs had established a partnership between father and son, so the girls' clubs now brought about a mother-daughter combination for home improvement. "They began in the garden, worked in the backyard and then into the kitchen," writes Mr. O. B. Martin, one of Doctor Knapp's early assistants.

Teaching by demonstration, gardening and poultry raising, canning and preserving fruit, vegetables and meats and their juices, sewing and knitting, the women agents soon gained large audiences in clubs and elsewhere. In pursuing these details of the program, they apparently always kept in mind the larger needs of the home and ever sought its improvement. Running water in the house, fireless cookers, installing motor-driven equipment such as washers, churns, sewing machines and the like, all served this end. There was scarcely anything which promised help to farm women and the lightening of their tasks or broadening their vision to which the home demonstration agents did not put their

hand. And where their leadership was good, they won a place of peculiar influence in the homes of the South, negro as well as white.

#### IN THE NORTH AND WEST

Home demonstration work in the Northern and Western states, like agricultural agent work, had a somewhat different and much later origin. In most of the states it was a direct outgrowth of the agricultural work, and the women agents were appointed in coöperation with the county farm bureaus. Boys' and girls' club work did not occupy as important a place in the work here as it did in the South, special club agents being employed for this purpose. In Illinois home demonstration agents were employed entirely apart from agricultural agents in coöperation with county home bureaus, and in New York with a farm and home bureau association which recognized both agents on an equal basis. Its early history has been recorded by Miss Florence E. Ward of the United States Department of Agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

"The work actually began in Erie County, New York, in August, 1914, when Miss Mills was appointed home demonstration agent on state funds. The second appointment was that of Miss Gertrude M. McCheyne, who began work in Box Elder County, Utah, on May 1, 1915. Other agents appointed on state funds were Miss Minnie Price, who began work in Hampden County, Massachusetts, in July, 1915, and Miss Eva Benefiel, who was appointed in Kankakee County, Illinois, in August of the same year."

During 1916 eleven appointments were made coöperatively between the state colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture as follows: In New York four, in Massachusetts three, in New Hampshire two, and in Utah and in Arizona one each. In 1917 the number of home

<sup>1</sup> Department Circular 141, January, 1921.

demonstration agents increased to twenty-eight. Emergency appropriations and war needs raised the number rapidly to eight hundred and three in 1918, but this number soon fell away to six hundred and nine in 1919, and to two hundred and eighty-six in 1920.

#### STRONG AND WEAK POINTS

Home demonstration work in the North has suffered from several circumstances which have seriously limited its development. Some of these the South has shared. Others it has not. In too many states strong home economics departments in the state colleges have been lacking, so that a good base for extension work, which the men agents had in the agricultural subject-matter departments of the colleges, was absent in the case of the women's work. This has usually resulted in a weak or an unsound program, except where the need has been met in some other way. For this reason many agents have failed to justify themselves to their counties. The girls' club work has probably made it somewhat easier to maintain the work in the South.

Again home demonstration work in the North suffered greatly from a forced and superficial development during the war. It was longer and hence better established in the South, but also suffered there, though perhaps to a less degree. Poorly trained agents were put in the counties by both state and federal governments, often without a worthwhile program, but to promote the general "food will win the war" idea in such detailed ways as were passed down from above by the Department, the colleges and the Food Administration. The counties were not ready for the agents in many cases, did not want them, and in but few cases offered either financial or organized coöperation. So with the close of the war the work of more than half of

these emergency agents was dropped. But the influence of their war efforts continued, and in many counties has had to be lived down before the work could be permanently established.

The war home demonstration agent work was more often a liability than an asset. Until very recently few home demonstration agents have had good organized support from the women of their counties. They have had co-operators, but not moral and financial support. Farm women have felt little or no responsibility for the agent or her work. The home demonstration agent has more often worked for than with rural women. Only in proportion as this piece of work has utilized the fundamental principles of good organization and leadership for real service of a vital character, outlined elsewhere in this book, has it become permanently established. Elsewhere it has failed, at least temporarily—and unfortunately this failure has been too general.

#### THE PROGRAM OF WORK

Food preservation and the proper use of food—now dignified under the title of “human nutrition”—have loomed large in the home demonstration program. At first it consisted largely of canning and giving out of receipts. Nowadays it is dealing with important nutrition problems. Clothing work, beginning with details, is becoming the demonstration of correct principles of clothing design and use. Household management, home nursing, health in the home, community enterprises, and the improvement of home surroundings, all occupy an important place in the agent’s activities. Usually she gives more attention to social and community problems than the agricultural agent. Less work in gardening, poultry and other production enterprises is engaged in in the North than in the South.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE MOVEMENT

It was inevitable that the permanent objectives of the county agent movement should be the result of an evolution of ideas and ideals. Even though it might have been given to a single individual in the beginning to see all its possibilities or even its probable development, he would hardly have had the temerity to have proclaimed them then.

#### DIFFERENT IDEALS AND POINTS OF VIEW

Certain it is that those who in its beginning thought that they saw the future of county agent work did not agree as to what this future was to be. Particularly, during the period from 1910 to 1915, ideals and viewpoints were exceedingly diverse. Farmers themselves hardly realized at all what this new idea had in store for them, and were at first quite inclined to be critical. Educators were afraid of its future as an educational movement. Its own sponsors were not at all agreed as to what it ought to do. Indeed, the evolution of the ideals of the movement has not yet ceased and ten years from now it may have—probably will have—taken on quite a different character than it now possesses.

To federal authorities and employees, the county agent was a government representative. To most college administrators and professors, he was the field agent and itinerant teacher of the college. To others he was a "farm adviser," a rural agricultural leader, an organizer of farmers, accord-

ing to their concept of the movement. His farmer constituents usually judged him by the service that he rendered their respective communities. He was variously looked upon by them as a college man or "book farmer," and therefore a useless and expensive luxury, a real expert or specialist, and consequently as a valuable source of information, or, by still others as just another agent and in the class with the peddlers of books or lightning rods. Some states there were whose people regarded the county agent wholly as a public officer, while others would have the management of his work partly in the hands of those he chiefly served, the members of the county farmers' association. The evolution of these various points of view to a more or less common ground is a most interesting study.

#### WASHINGTON'S VIEWPOINT

The United States Department of Agriculture had from the first looked upon the county agent as its own local representative among farmers and as a disseminator and a teacher of the information which its scientists and representatives had discovered and gathered. This is well shown in the Department's Bulletin 259, issued in October, 1912, by W. J. Spillman, then in charge of the work, which gives as the objects of county agent work:

- (1) To carry to the farmer the results of scientific research in his behalf, as well as the results of experience of other farmers and to aid the farmer in applying these results to his work, and

- (2) To reorganize and redirect the agriculture of the various sections of the country.

A good many persons in the Department, and in the Congress as well, apparently regarded the farmer as one badly in need of scientific information, which if he only had

and applied would surely and immediately make him successful, but one incapable of acquiring it himself. Naturally, then, these persons saw in the county agent a means of direct communication between the scientist and the farmer, who would take to him the information that he needed and show him how to use it.

Again many of these persons in official Washington realized that the government was paying a considerable part of the county agent's salary in the early days, and they quite plausibly expected that this entitled the Department of Agriculture to control his activities. The franking privilege or free use of the mails, which is extended to all county agents through the Department, has proved to be a most convenient and useful means of reminding county agents of their connection with and their responsibility to the Department. At the beginning of the work, before the enactment of the Smith-Lever law, when the Department paid a large share of the county agent's salary direct, its influence in shaping the movement in the direction which it thought it ought to go was proportionally larger than now when the public's share of his salary is paid through the college. At that time the federal government undoubtedly exerted too large an influence for the permanent good of the movement.

But as the states through their agricultural colleges, and later the farmers through their county associations acquired a larger share of control, particularly as the counties began to pay a correspondingly larger proportion of the bills, their local and more practical viewpoints helped to give a better balance to the movement. Indeed, so far has this localizing influence gone, that there are many who now feel that the movement is now too much in the hands of farmers for its own good and that of the Nation. But this is an extreme

view which only experiences that we have not yet had can confirm.

There is a real need for a more sympathetic understanding between the farmer and representatives of the Department of Agriculture at Washington, whose primary job it is to aid him in meeting his problems. Farmers have often failed to visualize and therefore to appreciate what this great public agency has in the way of information that is helpful and useful. They need contact with the workers in the Department in order to know their qualifications and the service that they can render. In the majority of cases when he comes really to know these men, the farmer finds that they are farm reared, sincerely interested in the problems of the farmers, and earnestly desirous of being helpful.

On the other hand, these government representatives are often under the handicap of having spent so much time in their offices and in hotels in the big cities, while on their travels, that they have failed to understand all the farmer's problems and the limitations under which he labors, and consequently fail to appreciate his point of view. Too often their observation of farm conditions is from Pullman car windows and from automobiles on the state road, rather than in the barnyard and the back lot. They need a closer and more sympathetic contact with farmers. The county agent may well be the one to bring the farmer and the government's agricultural employees closer together on the common meeting ground of the farm bureau office, the community meeting and the field demonstration, to their mutual advantage.

#### THE VIEWPOINT OF THE STATE COLLEGE

At least two objects seem to have been prominently in the minds of those who drew the state legislation and for-

mulated the state policies affecting county agent work: increasing the food supply and agricultural education.

The first was the idea of the development and conservation of the agricultural resources of the country by increasing the area and productivity of the tillable land and hence the Nation's food supply. This idea was also probably at the root of the Chamber of Commerce and railroad interest in the county agent movement. It was and for the most part continues to be the background reason in the minds of city dwellers and consumers as to why the government should interest itself in the farmers' problems. By increasing production, it is vaguely hoped that the cost of food will be reduced. So in the state's legislation the words "development" and "improvement" frequently occur. Thus in Pennsylvania the counties appropriate "for the purpose of improving and developing the agricultural resources of the county." The New Hampshire law provides for "the development of the farming industry," while Indiana expects "to promote the improvement and advancement of agriculture," and Illinois "soil and crop improvement."

The other dominant idea in the public mind, as indicated in the state legislation and official statements of those in charge of it, was education—the extension of the accumulated knowledge of the state colleges of agriculture and the experiment stations, so as to make it readily available on the farms. In Missouri, for example, it was thought that "it is the chief function of the farm adviser (county agent) to bring to the attention of Missouri farmers these more profitable systems of farming which have been determined by the most careful and painstaking investigations of the experiment stations." In Oregon, the useful application of "the vast fund of agricultural information" was stated as the first and most important reason for county agent work. The majority of the state laws provided for the employment

of "farm demonstrators," "farm advisers" or "county agents" on a county unity basis, placing them under the supervision and direction of the state agricultural college.

Both these functions then, agricultural development and extension of agricultural education, have from the first been the ideals of most of the states as to what the county agent's work should be. Incorporated in most of the state legislation on the subject, in one form or another, they have also come to be quite generally accepted as ideals, both by the public and by the profession.

#### THE COUNTY AGENT AS A TEACHER

That the good county agent should be a teacher of better agriculture—a more profitable farming and a more satisfying country life—almost goes without saying; but it is much more easily stated as a theory than practiced as a fact. His school house, if not "the world," still embraces from two hundred to two thousand square miles, and his pupils from 5,000 to 50,000 in number are adult men and women, together with children of advanced school age and above, with ideals, habits and customs already well established. He has little or no control over his pupils—he cannot compel them even to listen to his teaching, much less to accept and practice it. He must depend on drawing his pupils to him by giving his instruction in as interesting and useful form as possible, and by showing them through such demonstrations "that he who runs" will be persuaded to read and to accept. It is not an easy task. Not only do practical experience and good technical college training count heavily, but also personality and the qualities of good leadership enter very largely into such teaching. It is, necessarily, done under all sorts of conditions and in widely scattered places, in barns and fields, in school houses and in grange

and club halls. But it has the frequent advantage of plenty of good illustrative material readily at hand, in live plants and animals.

That so much of better farming methods, of better living facilities and of better farm business and farm organization, has been taught so many farmers by the itinerant county agent in so short a time as a single decade is ample evidence that he is functioning as a teacher.

#### AS A "FARM ADVISER"

The name "Farm Adviser" used in several of the states to designate the county agent, is significant of the emphasis put by these states on the advice phase of the county agent's work. It was evidently expected that a considerable part of the agent's time would be consumed in advising individual farmers, upon request, in the management of their farms. This personal or individual service, if wisely and competently given, is of great importance and value to the man who wants it, and almost invariably it necessarily occupies a considerable portion of the county agent's time and effort. However, the dangers and the cost of giving such individual advice, the limited proportion of farmers in a territory of from one to ten thousand farms who can be thus aided, together with the greater need for and the less cost of group assistance, have all tended to minimize this personal service. But the name "adviser" has stuck.

It was Ben Franklin who said "we can give advice but not conduct." Advice implies knowledge and deliberate consideration if it is to be worth having. It is difficult for a county agent or any other person to secure all the requisite information about a particular farm or farmer to give very valuable advice. Nor can he be sure that his advice, if given, will be correctly interpreted and followed. The

possible loss and injury from poor advice should make the adviser very certain that his recommendations are worthy to be followed before he gives it.

The value of all such advice is directly proportional to the known definite knowledge and experience of the adviser. It must be practicable and applicable and it must be wisely applied. The wise county agent will stick to general principles in advising, realizing that the man who does not know how to apply such principles is both dangerous and useless to advise in any case. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that a person who has made a special study of a problem and who has had a wide experience, especially if he has the requisite local knowledge to apply it, is the best qualified to give worthwhile advice.

#### ORGANIZING FARMERS

Possibly because of the relatively unorganized condition of American agriculture and the need and demand for co-operation among farmers at this time, this form of county agent service has come to occupy a relatively large part of his time and attention. In the early consideration of the county agent's functions, this phase was given little serious thought, except perhaps in relation to local farmers' clubs or granges, or to such minor production organizations as cow testing associations.

As a result of a better realization of their marketing problems accompanying and immediately following the war, farmers have now demanded that county agents give a larger proportion of their time to helping set up farm marketing organizations. Mr. W. A. Lloyd of the Department of Agriculture has shown that the agents have responded to this demand by increasing the proportion of their time devoted to marketing from seventeen per cent in



1915 to sixty-one per cent in 1920. So farmers themselves consider that one of their most important needs lies in this field of coöperative organization for economic ends, and have expressed their point of view that county agent work should have as one of its most important ideals the measurable fulfilment of this need.

Not only was there a need for the organization of the farm forces for coöperative buying and selling, but there was also need for their organization to make possible the better application of scientific methods and modern ideas to production. The cow testing groups, seed improvement and breeding associations are good examples of the results of the county agent's organizing ability applied to this field. The bringing together of the best breeders, the most skilful growers in the county improvement or of farmers generally in farm bureau association itself, as a federation of forces for a better and more efficient production, is a powerful force toward improvement.

Efficient production still offers the best incentive and the largest opportunity for individual gain. Every good farmer wants to get the largest crop obtainable with a reasonable expenditure of time and money. And it is usually true that those farmers who have found their business most profitable and most satisfying are the ones who have been able to secure crops above the average without excessive costs of production. The county agent then should not neglect this part of his field because of the great stress put upon marketing at the present time, but strive to maintain a well-balanced effort.

#### RURAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is hard to define because it so often consists of the intangible. And yet it is very real and vital to

almost every successful enterprise. Good leadership inspires confidence, stimulates initiative, gets things done. All this implies knowledge, training, personality and power. No need among farmers was greater and no results of county agent effort have been more worthwhile than the exercise by the county agent of his own qualities of leadership, and the searching out and arousing the abilities of local farmers who have these leadership qualities. Little considered as a reason for the county agent's existence in the beginning, good leadership has come to be one of its essential qualities. The agent who lacks it labors under a handicap, however well trained and experienced in other ways he may be.

#### A HEADQUARTERS FOR AGRICULTURE

Every community has its headquarters for religious affairs in its churches, for its educational affairs in schools, and for its political affairs in election districts, but few, if any, of the more than twenty-five hundred agricultural counties in the United States have, until the coming of the county agent, had any headquarters for what is usually their most important single business—farming.

Prior to the advent of the county agent and his local office usually at the county seat, hardly a county could be found where a stranger could go to find out the county's farming and market resources if he thought of purchasing a farm there, or who bred pure stock of a particular breed, or who had pure seed to sell in case he wanted to buy. Indeed, the local farmers themselves had no adequate means of knowing these things. Nor did these same counties provide any rallying point for farmers or their organizations, or facilities or other encouragement to advertise and to develop its resources. There was no suitable place where

agricultural statistics and records could be kept available or made most useful to the people of the county, or where information and advice as to what the best practices and methods, could be locally at hand. These needs and others the county farm bureau office and the county agent have met. Now farmers wonder how they got along without such a headquarters previously.

### SUMMARY

The ideals of a movement, the scope and possibilities of which could not be entirely foreseen, have by processes of evolution and as a result of new perspectives, now come to a more or less common ground. Old viewpoints have given way to new and more competent ones. While there would undoubtedly be disagreement as to the relative importance of the various ideals, according to local conditions and points of view, there has come to be more general accord as to the ideals which should properly govern the functions of a county agent. These may now be summed up in the order of the degree in which it seems that they probably vitally affect the farmers' and the nation's welfare.

(1) Rural leadership in its broad sense, including the discovery, stimulation and training of farmer leadership—help to help himself.

(2) The teaching, chiefly by demonstration, of sound and improved farm and market practices and methods to the end of greater farm efficiency.

(3) The organization and federation of the local agricultural forces to the common purpose of more efficient production, marketing and distribution.

(4) The establishment and maintenance of a useful county headquarters for agricultural affairs.

(5) The giving of advice to individual farmers on their farm practice, farm management and marketing problems.

## CHAPTER X

### THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION AND STATUS OF COUNTY AGENT WORK

By provisions of law and by general public acceptance, county agent work has become an integral part of the co-operative extension service of the state agricultural colleges, and a local agency for the conservation, development and protection of farm resources, in which farmers are directly and vitally interested. As such, it functions in coöperation with these colleges which also represent the United States Department of Agriculture in their respective states. All public agricultural educational agencies, county, state and national, are related to one another and function in co-operation with each other as a part of the national agricultural system. Before one can fully understand the functioning of a particular part of this system, like the county agent work, he needs to call to mind the other parts and other public functions and properly to differentiate the several kinds of institutions and their functions.

#### FOUR PUBLIC FUNCTIONS

In general, the state exercises four special relations or obligations toward agriculture, both in the interest of farmers and for the benefit of the general public. These are: (1) law enforcement or administration, (2) research or investigation, (3) resident teaching at state schools and colleges, and (4) the extension teaching function. All of these have been established by law and are annually provided for

by public appropriations. Each deserves a brief description here.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

The law enforcement or administrative function is exercised by both federal and state governments. To the U. S. Department of Agriculture is entrusted the enforcement of all federal laws specifically affecting agriculture and the food supply, together with the administration of all funds appropriated by the Congress for agricultural purposes. In the same way, to the states' departments of agriculture is assigned the administration of all the state laws directly affecting agriculture and the food supply.

The federal department was established on May 15, 1862, and its head, the Secretary of Agriculture, was raised to the rank of a cabinet officer in 1889. In sixty years it has grown to large proportions, now employing more than fifteen thousand persons and having the supervision of the expenditure of more than thirty million dollars annually. Only a part of this is expended for law enforcement, however. The Department inspects meat, grain, canned goods and other food commodities prepared for interstate shipment, enforces federal pure food laws, administers the forest service, has charge of the protection of plants and animals from insects and diseases with quarantine powers, and all other agricultural regulatory work of the federal government. In addition to these duties, it conducts the federal weather service, gathers and disseminates agricultural statistics, including crop reports and administers federal aid to road building.

The functions of the state departments, while in general regulatory, are less uniform in character and less clearly defined. They enforce state laws relating to livestock, fertilizers, feeds, human foods, the control of insect pests and

diseases, etc. In some states they also have charge of forest legislation, highway administration and immigration. They collect and publish agricultural statistics and in most states have the supervision of the public aid to state and county fairs. In the past they have usually conducted farmers' institutes, but in most states this educational extension activity has now been transferred to the state agricultural colleges.

To state or federal departments then, according to whether the question is local or national, should be addressed all inquiries concerning the law, all complaints regarding its enforcement, and reports or suggestions concerning the things it is charged to do.

#### THE RESEARCH FUNCTION

The object of research is to discover and make available to farmers and to the public generally fundamental agricultural truths. This function is exercised by state and federal experiment stations and by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. To these public institutions we owe most of our knowledge of seed, feed, fertilizer and human food analysis, bacteria in milk, and our ability to control insects and diseases by spraying, together with other equally valuable and useful information.

In 1887 the federal government, through the Hatch Experiment Station Act, established a federal system of experiment stations and with it the principle of public support of these institutions. They were further aided and encouraged by the supplementary Adams Act of 1906. Although the federal government was the pioneer in establishing these stations, the states have now become their chief sources of support. Approximately four millions of dollars of federal and state funds are now expended annually for

agricultural research and investigation; but this is insufficient to maintain the work as it should be, and to keep in advance of extension of which it must be the chief source of supply.

#### AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

In order to make it possible for persons to prepare themselves especially for agricultural pursuits, whether for farming itself or for related public service, the federal Congress in July, 1862, made provision in coöperation with the states for the giving of systematic and scientific instruction, information and training in the principles of agriculture. This epoch-making legislation, known as the Morrill or Land Grant Act, because it appropriated thirty thousand acres of public land (instead of money) for each representative which each state then had in Congress, laid the foundation of agricultural education in the United States. Its object was to endow, support and maintain "at least one college in each state where the leading object . . . shall be to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts."

This act was also supplemented in 1890 and again in 1907 by additional federal legislation and appropriations, and its purposes enlarged to include the training of agricultural teachers. As in the case of the experiment stations, these colleges now derive the greater part of their support from the states and are controlled by state appointed boards of trustees. To officers of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, however, is entrusted the administration of all the federal appropriations assigned to these colleges. Every state now has its agricultural college and 35,000 to 40,000 students annually receive instruction at them. In most states there are also special agricultural schools and courses in high schools.

## THE EXTENSION FUNCTION

Legislative acceptance of "extension," as it relates to agriculture as a public obligation, marks a new and important step in public policy. When adequate state and federal provision had been made for the support of agricultural colleges, it was still necessary for persons who desired to take advantage of it to come to the colleges and live there at their own expense in order to receive the instruction. This, naturally and in itself, limited the number of those who could take advantage of the instruction provided. In accepting agricultural extension as a public function, the state and federal governments have undertaken to make scientific and practical agricultural and home making instruction and information available "*to all the people in the localities where they reside.*" This marks a great step forward in public education and is a necessary corollary with experiment station research and agricultural college teaching and extends their usefulness. The county agent plays a vital part in this plan.

Extension work is not entirely of recent origin. Farmers' institutes were an early and important method of extension teaching. These were begun in Illinois, Iowa and New Hampshire as early as 1869 or 1870, in Michigan in 1875, in Massachusetts in 1878, in New York in 1887, and in most of the other states about the same time or soon after. The farmers' institutes were pioneer institutions in agricultural extension teaching and did much to prepare the way for our present agricultural colleges and schools and especially for the extension system and the county agent.

With the growth of the agricultural colleges under the Morrill Act, considerable staffs of teachers, though few in number at first, were gradually accumulated. In addition



to their resident teaching, these men began to give lectures about the state, in order to establish contact with farmers, to learn their problems, as well as to give information. The demand for this pioneer service grew rapidly as the people became acquainted with it. Out of this work grew most of our modern forms of extension. Personal visits and acquaintanceships led to series of lectures in various communities and then to local extension schools or short courses, farm trains, local surveys, tests and demonstrations on farms, winter short courses at the colleges, and finally to local demonstration agents. Out of correspondence developed bulletins, reading courses, and a regular system of extension publications. And from a limited coöperation with granges, farmers' clubs, churches, fairs and schools, came an organized relationship with farmers through their public county associations or farm bureaus.

A national extension system employing thousands of agents and specialists, and reaching yearly hundreds of thousands of farmers, has now been evolved. This was made possible by the Smith-Lever Extension Act, which was itself the culmination of a quarter century or more of the slowly developing extension movement.

#### THE SMITH-LEVER EXTENSION ACT

By July 1, 1914, farm demonstration work in the South had been carried on for nearly ten years and farm management field studies had been under way in the North and West for almost as long. Together, they had resulted in the appointment of six hundred and seventy-six agents in the South and two hundred and fifty-two in the North and West. There was a widespread sentiment that these two lines of work should be put upon a permanent basis and

legislation was therefore sought from Congress which would accomplish this end.

Under the leadership of Representative Lever of ~~North~~<sup>South</sup> Carolina in the House and of Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia in the Senate, with the help of Department officers, and the intelligent persistent backing of the agricultural colleges, the Smith-Lever agricultural act was worked out and passed by the Congress in May, 1914. It became effective the following July. The act contains several important provisions which, since it forms the basis of county agent work, should be generally understood. These are (1) coöperative management with the states, (2) progressive appropriations, (3) the state duplication or offset of federal moneys, (4) the method of the distribution of funds, and (5) certain limitations.

### COÖPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

The federal Department of Agriculture had begun to do some independent extension work in the states and this had tended toward confusion and sometimes toward misunderstanding. A precedent had been set in the Hatch and Adams experiment station acts for close coöperation with the state colleges and this precedent was now followed by the framers of the Smith-Lever Act. It was provided that all work done under the act must be in coöperation with the states through the Land Grant or state colleges designated by the state legislatures which must also formally accept the provisions of the law before it became operative in any state. It was further provided that the director of extension at the state college must draw up definite plans and projects covering the work proposed for the ensuing fiscal year and that these must be approved by the Secretary of Agriculture before the funds became available.

Under this act a general agreement was entered into between the U. S. Department of Agriculture and each of the state colleges, under which the colleges agreed to establish and maintain an administrative division, to administer all extension funds through this division and to coöperate with the Department in all of its extension work. The Department in turn agreed to establish and maintain a states relations service through which it would conduct all agricultural relations with the states and that it would carry on all of its extension work in coöperation with the colleges. Both mutually agreed that all extension work should be planned and executed together, the colleges initiating and the Department approving the plans, that all agents appointed should be joint representatives of both and that the headquarters of the work should be at the colleges. Thus all agricultural extension work is coöperatively planned and executed in each state.

#### FINANCES

Not all the funds provided were made available the first year, as most of the states did not have the organization ready to make good use of them. The first year ten thousand dollars was appropriated to each state without restriction. The next year six hundred thousand dollars more was made available and thereafter five hundred thousand dollars was added each year for six years or until and including the fiscal year of 1922-23, and permanently each year thereafter—a total of four million, five hundred and eighty thousand dollars annually.

This money, after the original ten thousand dollars to each state, was to be distributed “in the proportion which the rural population of each state bears to the total rural population,” as determined by the next preceding federal

census. This latter provision caused some shifting of funds in 1920 from the Eastern and Middle Western to the Far Western and Southern states. Moreover, this additional money was not to be paid to any state "until an equal sum had been appropriated for that year by the legislature of such state, or provided by state, county, college, local authority, or individual contributions from within the state." And this duplicate or offset money is subject to the same rules and regulations as the federal funds.

These moneys cannot be used for buildings or for the purchase or rental of land, for teaching at the college, for agricultural trains, or more than five per cent of them for printing. With the state appropriations which are usually much more than sufficient to meet the required offset and the county appropriations and other resources of county agent work, there is now (1922) annually available approximately eighteen million dollars for extension work in all its phases.

#### THE COUNTY AGENT'S PLACE IN THE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Up to this point the procedure in all the states is quite uniform. As already pointed out in chapter three, there is a wide difference in the various states, in the relations between the states—the state colleges—and the counties. In some states the colleges dominate—if not entirely control—the work, while in others they share its management with the counties on a partnership basis. There are all degrees between these two extremes.

Usually and ideally, however, much the same relationship is established between the college and the county association as exists between the college and the Department of Agriculture. A memorandum is entered into between the college and the county association, or farm bureau as

**MAXIMUM AMOUNTS OF FEDERAL FUNDS WHICH EACH STATE IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE  
UNDER THE COÖPERATIVE EXTENSION ACT**

State.	Regular.			Supplementary.	
	Fiscal year 1920-21	Fiscal year 1921-22	Fiscal year 1922-23	Fiscal year 1920-21	Fiscal year 1921-22
Alabama.....	\$121,041.07	\$138,801.22	\$156,690.28	\$53,729.55	\$53,667.18
Arizona.....	18,863.27	25,274.15	27,281.67	4,288.68	6,322.56
Arkansas.....	96,171.76	112,384.07	126,604.08	41,696.01	42,660.03
California.....	67,026.85	86,707.64	97,361.48	27,593.64	31,961.52
Colorado.....	34,761.87	44,067.38	48,798.96	11,981.55	14,194.74
Connecticut.....	17,218.85	41,120.06	45,442.29	3,492.99	12,966.69
Delaware.....	16,610.76	17,161.04	18,155.63	3,198.75	2,983.77
Florida.....	43,515.89	52,912.22	58,872.25	16,217.37	17,880.09
Georgia.....	140,062.92	161,853.84	182,944.65	62,933.67	63,272.43
Idaho.....	26,062.34	31,911.83	34,955.14	7,772.10	9,129.93
Illinois.....	145,791.35	155,663.99	175,895.10	65,705.49	60,693.33
Indiana.....	107,810.27	111,391.40	126,473.54	47,327.55	42,246.42
Iowa.....	107,036.08	117,064.29	131,934.33	46,952.94	44,610.12
Kansas.....	85,203.20	90,641.37	101,841.56	36,388.65	33,600.57
Kentucky.....	118,955.57	134,894.80	152,241.30	52,720.44	52,039.50
Louisiana.....	82,800.91	91,975.89	103,361.43	35,255.28	34,156.62
Maine.....	32,672.78	42,811.84	47,369.04	10,970.70	13,671.60
Maryland.....	50,024.78	50,642.34	56,287.11	19,366.83	16,934.31
Massachusetts.....	25,142.20	24,156.50	26,122.68	7,326.87	5,898.54
Michigan.....	103,167.27	109,942.63	123,823.55	45,080.94	41,642.76
Minnesota.....	86,978.09	103,546.22	116,538.75	37,247.46	38,977.59
Mississippi.....	109,868.30	118,603.22	133,687.00	48,323.37	45,251.34
Missouri.....	129,009.92	137,280.88	154,958.78	57,685.45	53,033.70
Montana.....	25,241.71	36,398.09	40,064.49	7,375.02	10,999.20
Nebraska.....	65,365.44	72,413.99	81,082.60	26,789.73	26,005.83

**MAXIMUM AMOUNTS OF FEDERAL FUNDS WHICH EACH STATE IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE  
UNDER THE COÖPERATIVE EXTENSION ACT—Continued**

State.	Regular.			Supplementary.	
	Fiscal year 1920-21	Fiscal year 1921-22	Fiscal year 1922-23	Fiscal year 1920-21	Fiscal year 1921-22
Nevada.....	\$14,303.54	\$14,353.41	\$14,958.04	\$2,082.36	\$1,813.92
New Hampshire.....	21,022.86	21,439.79	23,028.65	5,333.64	4,766.58
New Jersey.....	49,572.67	56,182.54	63,735.67	19,148.07	19,659.39
New Mexico.....	27,634.90	30,690.35	33,564.01	8,533.02	8,620.98
New York.....	131,120.72	135,756.07	153,222.19	58,606.80	52,398.36
North Carolina.....	128,588.70	154,904.04	175,029.60	57,381.63	60,376.68
North Dakota.....	42,277.14	49,129.34	54,563.97	15,617.97	16,303.89
Ohio.....	142,042.14	155,850.04	176,106.99	63,891.36	60,770.85
Oklahoma.....	93,987.74	114,281.92	128,765.52	40,639.23	43,450.80
Oregon.....	32,972.86	37,483.26	41,300.38	11,115.90	11,451.36
Pennsylvania.....	200,617.70	227,991.59	258,268.29	92,234.37	90,829.83
Rhode Island.....	11,127.96	11,065.88	11,213.92	545.79	444.12
South Carolina.....	91,070.95	107,342.90	120,862.85	39,227.88	40,559.58
South Dakota.....	41,862.24	47,450.87	52,652.38	15,417.21	15,604.53
Tennessee.....	149,538.56	130,942.42	147,739.98	53,002.53	50,392.68
Texas.....	195,843.27	230,676.84	261,326.40	89,924.16	91,948.68
Utah.....	22,589.79	26,377.12	28,651.72	6,091.83	6,823.80
Vermont.....	21,747.77	26,982.35	29,341.01	5,684.40	7,075.98
Virginia.....	109,574.81	124,536.44	140,444.28	48,179.91	47,723.52
Washington.....	43,699.36	52,587.86	58,492.59	16,306.14	17,741.19
West Virginia.....	72,370.58	86,676.97	97,326.55	30,179.31	31,948.74
Wisconsin.....	93,519.09	107,186.18	120,684.26	40,412.46	40,494.24
Wyoming.....	16,454.20	19,599.83	20,933.14	3,123.00	3,999.93
Total.....	3,580,000.00	4,080,000.00	4,580,000.00	1,500,000.00	1,500,000.00

**FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR COÖPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION WORK, CLASSIFIED  
BY ORIGINAL SOURCES**

Sources of funds.	1914-15	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18
<b>Federal Government:</b>				
Farmers' coöperative demonstration work.....	\$905,782.00	\$900,389.92	\$958,333.87	\$951,333.82
Other bureaus.....	105,168.40	165,172.01	185,893.15	507,282.95
Federal Smith-Lever—				
Emergency.....	474,934.73	1,077,923.73	1,575,054.38	2,949,072.48
Regular.....				2,068,066.29
Total.....	1,485,885.13	2,143,485.66	2,719,281.40	6,475,755.54
<b>Within the State:</b>				
State and college—				
Offset—Smith-Lever.....	1,044,270.38	497,484.18	952,114.31	1,313,330.47
Other.....		872,733.90	832,114.16	881,091.25
Total.....	1,044,270.38	1,370,218.08	1,784,228.47	2,194,421.72
<b>County—</b>				
Offset—Smith-Lever.....	780,331.79	69,226.79	94,556.74	215,077.20
Other.....		973,251.79	1,258,296.14	1,863,632.29
Total.....	780,331.79	1,042,478.35	1,352,852.88	2,078,709.49
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>				
Offset—Smith-Lever.....		31,212.76	48,383.33	59,658.62
Other.....	286,748.55	276,786.09	244,873.55	494,219.38
Total.....	286,748.55	307,998.85	293,256.88	553,878.00
<b>Total within the States.....</b>	2,111,350.72	2,720,695.28	3,430,338.23	4,827,009.21
<b>Grand total.....</b>	3,597,235.85	4,864,180.94	6,149,619.63	11,302,764.75

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**FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR COÖPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION WORK, CLASSIFIED  
BY ORIGINAL SOURCES—Continued**

Sources of funds.	1918-19	1919-20	1920-21 <sup>1</sup>	1921-22
<b>Federal Government:</b>				
Farmers' coöper. demonstration work.	\$966,596.57	\$1,021,091.39	\$1,026,850.00	\$1,050,754.00
Other bureaus.....	935,373.64	406,020.96	174,497.00	100,205.00
Federal Smith-Lever—Emergency	4,598,243.13	.....	.....	.....
Regular.....	2,538,828.04	4,464,344.36	3,580,000.00	4,080,000.00
Supplementary.....	.....	.....	1,500,000.00	1,500,000.00
Total.....	9,039,041.38	5,891,456.71	6,281,347.00	6,730,959.00
<b>Within the State:</b>				
State and college—				
Offset—Smith-Lever.....	1,586,066.42	2,630,754.55	2,685,173.61	3,033,966.00
Supplementary.....	.....	.....	352,214.38	457,178.00
Other.....	901,828.49	1,244,465.72	1,617,945.00	1,390,813.00
Total.....	2,487,894.91	3,875,220.27	4,655,332.99	4,881,957.00
<b>County—</b>				
Offset—Smith-Lever.....	316,367.59	1,095,923.84	309,224.17	509,643.00
Supplementary.....	.....	.....	1,021,295.93	949,095.00
Other.....	2,291,209.30	2,865,739.87	3,727,035.00	4,388,405.00
Total.....	2,607,576.89	3,961,663.71	5,057,555.10	5,847,143.00
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>				
Offset—Smith-Lever.....	156,394.03	257,665.97	105,601.27	56,391.00
Supplementary.....	.....	.....	126,489.69	93,727.00
Other.....	370,653.29	672,073.26	610,416.00	887,183.00
Total.....	527,047.32	929,739.23	842,506.96	1,037,301.00
Total within the States.....	5,622,519.12	8,766,623.21	10,555,395.05	11,766,401.00
Grand total.....	14,661,560.50	14,658,079.92	16,836,742.05	18,497,360.00

<sup>1</sup>Allotments.

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it is usually called, which should provide for at least four things: (1) financing the work, (2) a program of work, (3) the coöperative employment of the county agents, and (4) supervision.

The amounts of the finances needed are arrived at by means of a budget in which the probable expenses for the ensuing year are carefully estimated in detail to cover salaries, travel, office and car maintenance, and miscellaneous items. The college provides a part of the salary and in some states a part of the expenses, the franking privilege—to the agent as a representative of the Department—and certain services of its specialists. The remainder of the budget is then raised locally, chiefly by securing appropriations from the county Boards of Commissioners or Supervisors or County Courts, as they are variously called, by membership fees and also, to a less degree, from private contributions and miscellaneous sources. In the making of this budget the county committee usually has the benefit of the experience and the advice of the county agent leader or his assistant.

#### THE PROGRAM OF WORK

Recently the colleges as coöperating parties in the work have quite properly begun to insist that the counties determine upon very definite programs of work for the co-operatively employed county agents, which they must approve, and then that the agents stick to these programs. This progressive step has been an evolution and the result of a miscellaneous activity of agents which has too often failed to be productive of results.

Ideally, this program is finally arrived at by a large committee of farmers, usually called the county advisory committee, made up of the community committees from each community in the county and thus representing all the

agricultural interests and all the sections of the county. This advisory committee receives and passes upon the reports and recommendations of special project committees appointed in advance by the farm bureau president on the advice of the county agent, to represent special phases of the county's farming, as dairying, fruit growing, etc., or special problems, as drainage and the use of lime.

In arriving at their recommendations these special committees have the services of the specialists of the colleges. The county agent is always on hand to help and to guide the committees with advice and suggestions out of his wide knowledge of the county, its problems and needs. The program thus arrived at is recommended to the county executive committee and the college, who pass upon it in relation to their resources and ability to carry it out. Men's and women's programs of work are often arrived at separately by different committee groups and this would seem to be good policy as many of their problems are quite different, and as it enlists more persons in the work. In such cases certain features, as recreation, general community betterment and the like, are determined upon together.

There are, of course, wide variations in this simple plan of procedure. Many elaborate schemes for arriving at a county program for county agents have been devised by Department supervisors and state county agent leaders, but most of them have failed or only been approximated because they were too cumbersome. In all too many cases no plan of procedure at all is used, or even the simple plan outlined above is not carried out, leaving the program making entirely to college representative and county agent. This is poor psychology and secures neither the best program nor the best coöperation and results.

## SELECTING AND SUPERVISING AGENTS

The most common plan of selecting county agents is the nomination of several suitable candidates for a county by the college, from among whom the county committee selects one that it believes can best serve the county. By this plan the college is able to draw on a wider range of candidates, and local nominations, which nearly always make complications, are avoided, but the county committee actually makes the final choice and, therefore, feels responsibility for its agent. In some states the college makes the appointment and assigns the agent directly to the county. Occasionally, the county selects its own candidates and asks college approval of its choice. In any case, the agent should be approved by both parties.

The candidate selected becomes the official representative of the state college of agriculture and of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in his county, as well as the agent for the coöperating county committee. From the Department he receives the government frank. The state college usually pays at least one hundred dollars a month or twelve hundred dollars a year toward the salary of each agent in the county, about one-half of which is commonly derived from the federal and one-half from the state sources. Some states pay more and a few less. The county agent then represents all the parties concerned, individually and coöperatively, but his chief job is to carry out the program mutually agreed upon.

Prior to the passage of the Smith-Lever Act, county agents were appointed by and reported directly to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, in the South through the district supervisors. Beginning in 1914, however, supervisors, known as state leaders, who are the joint representatives of the Department and the colleges, were appointed

in each state. Under both federal and state laws the general supervision of the work of the county agents is vested in the colleges. This in turn is now delegated to the county agent leaders, who report to the state director of extension and through him to the Department of Agriculture.

Further, by agreement with the county associations co-operating—written or implied—the supervision of all the field and the office work of the agents, including means and methods of carrying out policies and programs mutually agreed upon, and the correlation and systematization of projects and reports, together with the general conduct of the work in the counties, is placed in the charge of these county agent leaders in each state. They meet county executive and advisory committees to determine upon plans of work and to advise with them on problems that may come up, inspect county offices and field work and receive monthly or quarterly reports from the agents. There are usually separate state leaders for home demonstration agents and for boys' and girls' club or junior extension agents, as these three fields are somewhat differentiated in activities. Their work is correlated by the state extension director to whom all report.

#### THE PRESENT STATUS

With the passage of the Smith-Lever Extension Act, the number of county agricultural agents increased rapidly. On July 1, 1914, there were nine hundred and twenty-eight counties with agricultural agents; on July 1, 1921, eight years later, the number had increased to two thousand and forty-six counties. This means an agent in more than two-thirds of the three thousand and eleven counties, not all of which are agricultural, in the United States.

The home demonstration work which began later has

grown in 1921 to cover approximately six hundred and ninety-nine counties, about two-thirds of which are in the South.

Boys' and girls' club agents numbered a little less than two hundred on December 1, 1921, but much of this work is carried on by the adult men and women agents.

Agents in all three groups were hastily appointed during the war period as an emergency measure and without the necessary preparation in advance or sufficient local interest and support, with the result that the work was abandoned in several hundred counties, so that there are now fewer agents than in 1918, when the high point, with twenty-four hundred and thirty-five counties with agricultural agents alone, was reached. The movement, having suffered this war reaction, is now recovering and will undoubtedly ultimately cover all the agricultural counties.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FARM BUREAU AND ITS RELATION TO THE COUNTY AGENT

ANY one who will picture to himself the difficulties which would face a new county agent, a stranger to the county, in undertaking his job without a local organization of farmers to sponsor, to introduce him and to work with him, will readily appreciate the reasons for the farm bureau. The practical impossibility of securing and maintaining good contacts with several thousand farmers on an individual basis, would practically force group organization. How to obtain the necessary information about county conditions and individually successful farmers and leaders would be a troublesome problem. And trying to finance and to maintain the work on a sound basis without the help of a local organization would be likely to discourage the most ingenious.

This proved to be the experience of the early agents who tried it. So that it was not long before local advisory groups or committees were gathered together by the agents in an informal way. These advisory and informal committees later became the nuclei for the more definite county farmers' organizations.

#### SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE

A point in connection with these organizations which early became clear was that they should be practically single in purpose and that they must be wholly indepen-

dent. Few big new ideas have made themselves felt when they were but one of several objects of the organizations promoting them, a sort of "side show to the main tent." A big idea, a new movement, in order to succeed must usually have a definite organization to promote it. The association together of persons who believe in and are co-operating in a movement gives it a strength and an impetus that can hardly be obtained in any other way. This has been true in the case of the movement for prohibition, with most big political questions, with the Red Cross, and with innumerable private enterprises.

For this reason, as well as others, the farm bureau movement could not be a department or a bureau in a city chamber of commerce. Nor would a bureau so organized be likely to secure the sympathy or enlist the support of farmers. They would—as they did—whether or not unjustly, suspect the chambers of commerce of ulterior motives and of promoting their own interests through it. And it followed that if farmers would not accept the work and the management of city men, that they must not expect too much from their pocketbooks. Farmer management implied farmer financing.

A question frequently raised is why some farmer organization already in existence could not have been used. Why duplicate and multiply organizations?

Many satisfactory reasons are apparent to those who have given the subject some thought. There were, in the first place, no national farmers' organizations in the sense that they covered the whole country, and which were so organized that they could take over and promote this idea. Each one was strong in one section and weak or wholly absent in another and local situations had often arisen which had made it practically impossible to change these conditions. None of the big national farmers' organizations believed

sufficiently in the movement in the beginning to want to father it. Even if they had, they could not and should not have supplanted the objects for which such organization was created with another and more or less foreign object, such as the support of the county agent would be to them. Such combination of the farm bureau movement with another would, therefore, have weakened and caused it to fall short of its full development. Lastly, nearly all present farmers' organizations have limitations from which the farm bureau movement must be kept free if it is to fulfil its purpose. It must be non-secret, non-partisan, non-political, and all inclusive, if it is to successfully carry out its ideals. Other farmers' organizations are needed in their own fields to do their own work. The informal structure of the farm bureaus soon differentiated them from all other organizations and largely avoided antagonisms and petty jealousies.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The county farm bureau association idea, as we have seen, did not grow up in a year. Chiefly educational in character, its development has been neither spectacular nor emotional. It was an evolution out of the experiences which proved the need for it. The sponsors of the idea had to demonstrate its greater effectiveness as an aid in carrying on county agent work, and its indispensability in "reaching the last man."

The movement was unfortunate in the name it acquired as a department of a chamber of commerce, from which it was apparently unable to free itself. "Bureau," as has been said, sounds too much like a piece of furniture, or the seat of a government bureaucrat. The name "County Council of Agriculture," used in several of the Southern



states, would have been more pleasing to the ear and much more significant. It was unfortunate, too, that the word "association" was dropped because of its significance of an organization. This was partly because the name "farm bureau" was shorter and therefore snappier than with the word "association" attached, and partly because in 1916 a national convention of state leaders in Washington, after a long discussion and vigorous opposition, voted to adopt the name.

It seems to the writer that the true significance of the name "farm bureau" is as the combination of the coöperating agencies taking part in the work, of which the county association—the farm bureau association—is one, and the public institutions—the Department of Agriculture and the state college—the others. This conception which properly differentiates all parties and which has avoided the anticipated confusions in the public mind which have since arisen elsewhere, is written into the New York law and observed in that state.

The definition of the county association—officially known as the farm bureau—that is now generally accepted in practically all of the states is as follows:

"A county farm bureau is an association of people interested in rural affairs, which has for its object the development in a county of the most profitable and permanent system of agriculture, the establishment of community ideals, and the furtherance of the well-being, prosperity, and happiness of the rural people, through coöperation with local, state, and national agencies in the development and execution of a program of extension work in agriculture and home economics."

This definition characterizes a farm bureau in three essential ways: (1) as a local association of rural people; (2) as offering a broad program for the improvement of

agriculture; and (3) as a means of coöperation with state and national public agencies in the execution of such a program. We may conclude that this conception of a farm bureau in the thirty-three Northern and Western states is practically universal. The exceptions do not affect the general definition, but rather the degree of its application. Some states, for example, place greater emphasis on the local associations than do most other states.

The farm bureau idea as embodied in this definition seems to be accepted in the majority of the Southern states in a general way. Conditions and present organization are so different, however, that its application takes quite different forms.

#### EXTENT OF COUNTY BUREAUS

In the thirty-three Northern and Western states in 1919, 1,121 counties, or 70 per cent of all the agricultural counties in these states, were employing county agents on a permanent basis. Of the counties reported as employing agents, 82 per cent had "associations of people," as previously defined, supporting the work.

Summarizing for the entire country, it would appear that on December 1, 1921, 2,052 counties, or about 68 per cent of the entire number, were employing county agents, and 1,015 of these, or a little more than 49 per cent, supported their agents by paid membership associations; but less than one-half of the latter were reported to be functioning well. In addition there were on the same date 596 counties in the fifteen Southern states reporting local farmers' clubs.

#### COÖPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

In many states—Iowa, New York and others—the local board has full control of all local funds, including appro-

priations of county commissioners or boards of supervisors. In several states this power is limited to the funds derived from membership, and county appropriations pass through the college as in Ohio and Indiana, the county board advising only as to expenditures. In many states the local board has so little control even over local funds as to make its powers and responsibilities nominal in character and confined to "incidentals" and advice. Apparently about the same condition exists in the South, with a considerably larger degree of state centralization, and less actual control and management because of a less amount of local funds and in some cases no local organization.

In most of the states, the counties, properly, have an important part both in the determination of policies and in the making of programs; but the degree of responsibility varies somewhat with the amount of funds contributed.

In all of these points the Southern states fairly consistently retain full supervision of the agents at the college, fixing and paying the greater part of the salaries and often the expenses also, and using local county organizations, where they exist, in a purely advisory capacity in making up programs.

Perhaps in one-half of the states the local boards make written agreements with the college concerning finances, program, and employment of county agents, and many of those who do not have such agreements now are planning them. In most cases this is provided for by the state law.

Most states in the North and West recognize the county association as an independent association over which the state has no control, except in so far as their acts must be "coöperative" under the laws, and as is "mutually agreed upon" in connection with the county agent's work.

Recognition of this independent association as a partner with the public institutions in the conduct of "coöperative

extension work in agriculture and home economics" is made by nearly all the states.

In the South the county association or council was at first apparently almost exclusively an advisory organization with few if any administrative functions. It was "usually consulted in making up programs and budgets," but has had little real power to administer funds or initiate a program in the past. This is changing rapidly, however.

#### COÖPERATIVE FINANCING

In twenty-one states in the North and West in which the figures were gathered in 1919, the average total cost of a county farm bureau was four thousand and thirty-one dollars. The income, which was somewhat greater than this, was derived as follows:

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
United States Government funds (including S.R.S. and Federal Lever) .....	\$938	18.8
State Lever and state free funds .....	893	18.0
Appropriations of county boards of commissioners or supervisors .....	1,945	39.0
Membership fees in county association .....	665	13.3
Other local sources and miscellaneous .....	544	10.9

Assuming that the few items mentioned under "Miscellaneous" are all local, it appears that on an average the counties in the Northern and Western states in 1919 were paying 63.2 per cent of the cost of the work, of which nearly two-thirds was derived from county tax money, and about one-fifth from membership fees. In general the cost of the bureaus was highest in the East and lowest in the West. Counties in the Eastern states derive their largest support from county appropriations, and counties in the Western states from state and federal aid. High membership fees and increasing numbers of members had in 1921 greatly increased the income from this source.

In the South the average cost per county is usually much lower. Funds are derived more largely from federal and state sources than in the North and West. County appropriations provide the remainder, no membership fees being available in most counties.

Nearly 90 per cent of the counties employing county agents in twenty-three states in the North and West have membership associations with a fee. In 1919 the \$1 fee was decidedly the most popular, 370 out of 687 counties, or 54 per cent, having it. Six counties had a fee of fifty cents; 22, a fee of \$1.50; 40, a fee of \$2; 74, a fee of \$2.50 or \$3; 117, a fee of \$5; and 54 counties in Illinois had a fee of \$10.

In 1921 after the organization of the state and national federations all this had changed and materially larger fees were the rule. Only one state had a fee of \$1 in all its counties. Six states had a fee of from \$1 to \$10; eight from \$2 to \$10; six from \$5 to \$10; nine, \$5; and fifteen states \$10 for each member.

#### ADVANTAGES

The advantages of existing relationships between the county agent and the farm bureau most frequently mentioned are:

- (1) The local responsibility, and hence the greater local interest, of farmers when they have a part in the financing and management of the work.

- (2) The relationship develops the power of a local organization and a local leadership, and provides a way for the full utilization of these.

- (3) It brings public institutions into direct contact with farmers and localities, and vice versa.

(4) It emphasizes the educational character of the program because the plan is itself educational.

#### DISADVANTAGES

Too few states see any disadvantages whatever in the plan—an evidence of possible over-satisfaction, which may limit progress because of absence of alertness and safeguards. Disadvantages mentioned by four states are:

(1) The danger of becoming involved in political questions and engaging in politics.

(2) The danger that the local association may undertake enterprises, particularly of a commercial nature, in which neither the public partner nor the joint representative—the county agent—may properly take part.

(3) The delegation to, or the assumption by, the county agent of too much responsibility and too many duties, especially relatively unimportant details, to the detriment both of local initiative and of the educational program for which the bureau chiefly exists; in other words, making the agent a mere chore boy.

#### HOW THE BUREAUS FUNCTION

How do the county bureaus really function? Is the county agent the real motive power and the farm bureau simply his instrument, or is the bureau the real force in the county and the agent its employee to carry out its purposes and program, as arranged with the public institutions?

We have discussed the ideals, the organization and the relationships of the movement. We now need to see whether the ideal is being realized and to what extent. That there are now nearly one million members who pay,

more than four million dollars in dues ought to be sufficient evidence that the organization is a fact. How then is this force applied to the solution of county problems?

#### THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S JOB

An organization scattered over so wide an area as a county must necessarily depend very largely on a small elected executive committee. From seven to nine members is usually thought sufficient. Larger committees work with less facility and do not add appreciably to the wisdom of the decisions reached.

While this committee should, as far as practicable, represent the different sections of the county and the various phases of the county's farm interests, it is more important that its members be so located that they can meet once a month if necessary and be able to give the work of the bureau their time and best thought. It is especially important that the president and the secretary-treasurer be located near the office and not too far apart, for both must see the agent frequently and usually both must sign all bills. It often happens that a village business man with farming interests—a bank cashier for example—located in the town where the office is may be able to serve as secretary-treasurer, thus establishing a desirable town connection and perhaps facilitating the business of the committee as well.

Having made a budget, the first responsibility of the executive committee is to raise the necessary funds to meet it. It must also supervise the expenditure of the money. Keeping careful records of its disbursement is very important as more trouble is likely to arise over a little financial laxity than almost any other one thing. People will not readily forgive error or oversight in handling, not to

mention misuse, of public funds. Passing upon the program recommended to it by the advisory council, determining upon the most urgent phases of the work, conferring with state leaders and adapting state policies to local needs, employing agents, receiving reports, and meeting emergency questions as they arise, all require sustained interest, good judgment and a close acquaintance with the work. An executive committee that does not do the work expected of it, and in doing so inspire confidence, is not living up either to its opportunities or its obligations.

#### COMMUNITY COMMITTEEMEN AT WORK

Every rural community should have a live representative committee, of from three to ten members, to look after its interests with the bureau, and to promote the interests (sometimes called projects) of the bureau in its community. Its chairman elected by the local members or appointed by the county president should preside at all local meetings. If this committee is on the job it will largely determine the amount and character of the work done by the agent in its community. The full committee should meet with the agent at least twice a year, once to plan the year's program and once to sum up the results.

Not the least of the committee's duties nor always the most agreeable, is to plan and to carry out the local membership campaign and secure the local quota of members. The making of a community map, defining its boundaries and locating all farmers and members and listing bureau work, is always helpful in stimulating interest and in producing results. Committeemen will also be called upon frequently to furnish local information as to conditions and to answer questionnaires and referenda for the state and national offices. If this is done promptly and with care, it





Membership getting has not always been the most agreeable of the community committeeman's jobs, but the process has been a valuable educational one both with him and with the members. Membership should be based primarily on the local program of work and only secondarily on the state and national federation programs.



may contribute very effectively to the solution of state and national questions.

The community committeeman is not without his compensations and privileges. He is one of the recognized agricultural leaders in his community. The very fact of his being chosen is a recognition of his success, his good influence or his ability as a leader. He also becomes associated with other good farmers and leaders in his own county to his own profit. He is considered the local representative of his state college and the United States Department of Agriculture in extension work and of his state and national farm bureau federations, and is on all mailing lists to receive special helps and news. He meets state and other representatives who come from outside the county to attend meetings and conferences and whose contact with the community is usually made through him. With his county agent, he is, or should be, in frequent contact.

#### THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The county advisory council or committee is made up of all the community committeemen in each community in the county, or in some of the larger counties of the chairmen of these committees only. In the majority of the counties, on account of the limitations of distance, time and cost, this council meets but once or twice a year, though in small counties with centrally located offices which are favored with good transportation, it sometimes meets monthly, at least throughout the winter season.

Its chief and very important function is to recommend the county program of work based on community needs, as has already been outlined in Chapter X, and to advise the county committee on the larger or special county-wide problems which need attention. It usually helps to plan the

membership "drive" and frequently at an annual dinner, with outside speakers, great enthusiasm is aroused and the whole piece of work enlivened. At least one meeting of the council annually is indispensable alike to good farm bureau or county agent work.

#### THE COUNTY FARM BUREAU NEWS

An important need in any organization, sometimes overlooked, is that for a regular medium of getting the organization news and information pertaining to the work to the entire membership—a house organ. This is especially needful in cases where the membership is widely scattered and gets together in meetings but infrequently. The members' interest in the organization can only be consistently sustained by keeping them constantly and fully informed about what is being done. The plans of executive committee and agent, immediate and future, what other farmers and other county organizations are doing, news of the college and the Department and of state and national federations, together with results accomplished, farm organization news generally, local agricultural information and advice, especially that which is purely local in character and which the farm journals and weekly papers are not apt to carry, should be printed and sent to members at least monthly.

A large and increasing number of county farm bureaus now have their little monthly papers known as "Farm Bureau News" or "Farm Bureau Bulletin." These usually have departments of special interest to men, to women and to boys and girls. They often carry local advertisements for their members at a low rate, especially of pure-bred seed and livestock, and exchange columns for the convenience of their members who have articles they want to trade for others. They also carry some local merchants' advertising. This, it is claimed by some, is unfairly in competi-

tion with local papers and therefore not good policy; though it could probably be shown without difficulty that the use of the News stimulates rather than reduces advertising elsewhere. Because of the high grade of the circulation of these little papers, many national advertisers are now seeking space in them and this is probably in competition with local papers. This is a matter of policy for each local committee to decide. Advertising revenue usually defrays from one-half to all their cost. The News belongs exclusively to the local organization and the member's fee includes the subscription price. In the absence of such publications frequent circular news letters are used to keep the members informed.

Some persons have asserted that there was no need for these publications and that they were competitors of local newspapers who could and would be glad to perform all the service that they render if given a chance and necessary material to do so. This is the newspaper man's point of view. No house organ can or should take the place of a regular news service to local weekly and daily papers, which will give them what their readers want to know of the bureau's activities. The specialist in organization knows that it is desirable to have a house organ owned and controlled by the membership it serves which can publish what and all that it desires to get to its members when it wants to do so. The rapid spread of the county "News" idea is the best evidence of the need for it unfilled by other agencies.

Another disputed question is whether or not the county agent should serve as editor of the "News." The United States Department of Agriculture and the American Farm Bureau Federation have agreed in a memorandum that it is best that he should not. Theoretically, the executive committee, which is responsible for the paper, should ap-

point an editor from the association to write all the organization and most of the editorial material. It should be the function of the county agent to prepare all agricultural information and news. Practically, the county agent is usually compelled to do this, as he is the best qualified, though it does draw heavily upon his time. If he will always remember that he is a public and an educational agent, refrain from taking sides on argumentative questions, and from making criticisms which are likely to jeopardize his wholesome influence with his constituency—which many agents either cannot or do not do—he may continue to edit the “News” without more harm than good by so doing.

#### THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the association has two main functions: To elect officers and transact the necessary business of the organization for the ensuing year, and to furnish the occasion for a rousing get-together or mass meeting of the farmers of the whole county to hear reports of accomplishment, live problems discussed, and to make plans and record suggestions for their solution. Essentials for its success are a suitable meeting place, a businesslike program not too long, music and a good community song leader, and one inspirational speaker who can discuss briefly and intelligently some of the live farm problems of the day. It is also well to have some one—usually a county agent leader—review farm bureau ideals so as to keep them constantly before the members.

The mistake is often made by the program committee of crowding the program, which then gets behind schedule time, tires out the crowd and loses much of the value of the whole meeting. Well-planned advertising consistently carried out well in advance, is the only way, besides having

an attractive program, to get out a good crowd. The meeting itself requires very careful attention to details to make it go off well. County agents and officers will do well to remember that this is their one opportunity of the year to get all the members together in one rousing meeting to promote the bureau's program and work.

#### MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGNS

The collection of the membership fees, especially when these have to be solicited annually, always gives officers and committeemen much concern. Two general plans are in use. The oldest and best, so long as it can be continued successfully, is the collection of the fees by the voluntary work of the community committeemen. The other, which has been the method used in most of the Middle West and in the South, since the advent of the American Farm Bureau Federation, is the canvass by paid solicitors. In either case the territory is divided up into districts, usually school districts, and a committeeman assigned to each.

On the voluntary basis the local committeemen, having received previous instructions and equipment at the county advisory committee meeting, call on all the farmers in their respective districts, simultaneously, aided by a county-wide publicity campaign. Where the committeeman is a good one and knows how, he can and often does get one hundred per cent of the farmers in his district as members. The chief weakness in this plan is that so many local committeemen do not know how or do not like to canvass for members, so that they fail to function and as a result the membership is "spotted." Another objection to this plan is that the committeemen tire of the job, which is disagreeable to many. This can be met in part by having the secretary collect in advance as many of the old members' fees as he

can by mail, and by regarding the member as "for life" unless he resigns in writing.

In the case of the paid solicitor canvass, a crew of trained men receiving a per diem of from five to ten dollars a day are usually brought in from an outside county, and assigned to ride with local committeemen and do the soliciting in their respective districts. A county is thus systematically gone over in a regular clean-up campaign, usually under the direction of the state federation. More good canvassers are thus discovered or trained, and these are in turn sent into neighboring counties as paid solicitor crews.

This plan gets a much larger proportion of the farmers as members but at the heavy cost of from one to two dollars apiece, which of course must be taken out of the member's fee received for that year. While members are usually signed up either for three or five years, or for life, often on an authorized sight-draft basis, they can always relieve themselves of the obligation by resigning in writing, and they will stay in the organization no longer than they approve of its program and are satisfied with its results. The objections to the paid solicitor plan are that it tends to break down the voluntary service element—self-help, or doing for one's self—which is such a source of strength in any movement, and that it has in it the elements of the force of trade unionism and the likelihood of misrepresentation. In their zeal to get every farmer as a member and in the excitement of the campaign, too much pressure is often used on individuals, and promises are sometimes made by solicitors which cannot be fulfilled by the organization. Moreover, it is an expensive method. But it gets results which are at least temporary, and is therefore popular in most states just now.

In the older and more conservative states, where this plan is not so popular, a compromise plan is now being



tried out. A county campaign manager and a few paid solicitors are employed, trained in a school conducted by the state federation. These men give their whole time to working with the voluntary committeemen where their services are needed. During the period of development it has been altogether worthwhile to have committeemen visit their neighbors once a year and talk over the merits and the failures of the work locally. It has been good advertising for the bureau and county agent work and a good education in its fundamentals for both committeemen and members.

#### THE SIZE OF THE MEMBERSHIP FEE

Another problem which is a subject of much discussion just now is the amount of the membership fee in the county association. When the movement first started the fee was almost universally one dollar a year. But as the outlook and the program of the county associations grew and the costs of operation increased, a strong tendency to increase the fee developed. This was brought to a focus by the organization of the national federation. Almost immediately the fees were increased in the majority of the states to five or ten dollars a member, and even to fifteen dollars in one state, a considerable part of which of course went to state and national federations. The more conservative states, although compelled to increase their fees, kept them down to two or three dollars or at the most to five dollars. At the present time, however, the tendency is still strongly toward the larger fee.

The effect of these increased fees has been the development of big and ambitious programs, the raising of salaries and a general impetus to the movement. This has been accompanied, however, by a more cautious attitude

on the part of the public in placing its confidence in the movement, by the development of some jealousies on the part of some farm organizations and by Congressional investigations into the work. How much these things will amount to remains for the future to determine. It is a fair question to ask whether what has been gained is worth the price. Fees had to be raised of course as the program was enlarged and as costs increased. The real question is not the size of the fee but its relation to the program of work and the results which affect the individual member of each association.

#### THE HOME BUREAU

Just as in the case of agents, the farm bureau's work with women was in most instances not differentiated from that with men, but was carried on by the same agencies. The farm bureaus at first appointed project committees on women's problems which were comparable with its project committees on poultry or on farm drainage, for example. This, it seemed to the bureaus in some states, was too meager a recognition of women's work, which though perhaps less spectacular and less in the public mind, nevertheless, probably occupies a good half of the range of farm problems.

Economic problems just now loom large. But the problems of the home; its social life and contacts, as a place to rear farm children, and its efficiency, especially in relation to its equipment and conveniences—are not all these, after all, equal in importance with the problems of production and marketing? It is usually the farm woman who gives most thought to rural social and community problems and to the needs of the children, because this is her natural field and she is more sensitive to the need of

improvements than is the man. Less is also done in this field as a rule, chiefly because the man controls the pocket-book.

But great progress is being made. What is needed now is the opportunity and the means of solving problems—organization, for example, is one means—placed in the hands of rural women. If this is done they will probably solve most of their problems by their own initiative. The present organization in most of the states tends to smother and to hold back the initiative of women. It can never bring to their fullest exercise the latent abilities of women to cope with their own problems. This point of view is also in line with the trend of the times. With these facts in mind several of the states have given a larger opportunity to women to develop a competent organization of their own.

#### THE HOME BUREAU IN ILLINOIS

In Illinois for many years home demonstration work has been conducted in some counties independently of the county farm bureau, but like it, in coöperation with the University of Illinois and the United States Department of Agriculture. It is incorporated under the state law which provides for appropriations by county boards of supervisors for the use of "home improvement associations" (home bureaus), as well as for "soil and crop improvement associations" (farm bureaus). The home bureau in Illinois is a county-wide organization of women interested in the promotion of better methods of housekeeping and home-making.

This organization selects from among a group of candidates nominated by the University a trained woman to act as its adviser and agent in carrying out the county program of work for women. Such an agent must be a grad-

uate of a good four-year course in home economics, have first-hand knowledge of farm life and have five years of successful experience after graduation in some line of home economics work.

When such an agent has been approved by it, and when the county association has on its own initiative provided not less than \$2,500 of local funds, the University appor-tions a sum of Smith-Lever money to the county (\$1,500 in 1921) for the work. The women determine their own program, which usually includes selection of food, cloth-ing and home furnishings; keeping of household records; planning of work; household equipment and labor-saving devices; the hot school lunch; home nursing and other home-making problems. Each member of the county asso-ciation pays a fee usually of \$5, and not less than three hundred members are required to effect a permanent or-ganization. The county association functions through an executive board, an advisory council, local units and special project committees in much the same way as does the standard farm bureau.

#### THE NEW YORK FARM AND HOME BUREAU

The two lines of work cannot, should not, be completely separated, because they relate to a single family unit. The farm and the home are themselves inseparable. They need a close correlation, but as two equal and coördinate parts.

In order to effect this object, New York State has or-ganized the county association into two equal and coör-dinate parts or divisions, a farm department or farm bureau, and a home department or home bureau. Any person wishing to join the association chooses the division with which he will affiliate. Naturally, most of the men

choose the farm bureau and most of the women the home bureau. Each department has jurisdiction over all matters which concern it alone. Each department elects an executive committee of its own, fixes its own fee, determines that part of its program which affects its own members primarily, and generally administers its own work.

All matters of common concern are passed upon by the general committee, which is composed of the executives of both departments, equal in number, together with one other member chosen by both. All budgets of proposed receipts and expenses, the employment of all agents, joint programs, as junior work, recreation, etc., are considered as matters of common concern, and are decided upon by a committee of the whole association. There is one treasurer who pays all bills which are in accordance with the authorized budget, upon the order of the respective committees signed by the president. The farm bureau chairman is usually—but not necessarily—president of the combined association. The essentials of this plan are incorporated in the New York law.

It is yet too early in the history of this movement to say what plan will prove best. That both the Illinois and the New York plans are working is evidenced by the fact that each state has a paid-up membership of about twenty-five thousand women, each of whom pays a fee of one dollar, and by the addition of several new county organizations since the war at a time when many counties in other states are dropping the work. Whatever the specific plan is, it is absolutely essential that the principles of self-help and freedom of initiative for women be embodied in it.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE STATE AND THE NATIONAL FARM BUREAU FEDERATIONS

IN the growth and development of the county agent and farm bureau movements, there have been four distinct steps: (1) The employment of county agents by the government, at first chiefly in coöperation with urban agencies and then in coöperation with farmers, (2) the organization of local county associations of farmers, usually called "farm bureaus," to coöperate in program-making and in the support and management of the county agent's work, (3) the federation of these county associations into state organizations to promote state programs especially along legislative and economic lines, and (4) the combination of the state federations into a national body to promote a national agricultural policy through economic, legislative and organization activities and generally to protect and to work for farmers' interests.

All this has taken place in the last ten years and most of it in the last five years. The last three steps have taken place almost simultaneously in many parts of the country—a fact which in itself constitutes one of the chief weaknesses of the movement. With the first two of these steps we have already dealt. It now remains for us to study the third and fourth steps in relation to their nature, purposes and effects.

THE MOVEMENT TOWARD FEDERATION AND SOME OF ITS  
CAUSES

By the middle of the year 1916 county agents were being employed in more than twelve hundred counties in the United States. In perhaps one-half of these counties, county associations of farmers were coöperating in the support of these agents. In several of the states one-half or more of the counties were thus organized.

As yet, however, there were only one or two state organizations or federations of these county associations, although informal conferences of their officers had been held in several states as early as the winter of 1915-16. This number included Vermont (October, 1915), New York, Illinois and Missouri. Out of these conferences grew a desire on the part of the county officers for more definite and formal state associations. Missouri was the first to form a state organization of its county bureaus, which it did on March 24-25, 1915, at Slater. Massachusetts organized its state federation at Worcester about a month later, or on May 11, 1915. Illinois formed the Illinois Agricultural Association in January, 1916. It was made up of individual members of the county associations. In February, 1917, during Farmers' Week at the State College, the New York State Federation of County Farm Bureau Associations was formed. In several other states similar groups were organized about the same time or soon after, so that by the fall of 1918 ten or twelve states had federations composed of county farm bureau units.

The primary purpose of these state federations was to promote, protect and unify the work of the associations in the counties and the idea in the state. The men in the counties expected that by getting together they could profit by each other's experiences and get ideas that would be

helpful at home. There was a natural curiosity to find out what the other counties were doing and how they did it. But more than this, there was undoubtedly in the minds of many of the delegates a desire and a hope for a larger organization that would come to mean to the state what the county farm bureaus were coming to mean to the counties.

But there were not only common problems to discuss, as finances, membership, results accomplished and methods of securing them; there were mutual legislative, educational and other interests to protect and marketing problems demanding a policy and a solution. Here were uniform county units being formed in most of the counties, coöperating in the employment of trained and energetic young men, supported by the most progressive farmers and with forward-looking programs. It was a very natural American trait to want to apply this idea and to use this machinery in a larger way.

Underlying all these objects there was undoubtedly an unformulated but none the less potent desire for a power and influence in state and nation commensurate with the importance of agriculture, and now being realized, as, for example, in the formation of the "agricultural bloc" in Congress.

#### PRESENT EXTENT AND FINANCES

It was not until after the organization of the national federation in the fall of 1919, that the movement for state federation became practically a national one. Up to this time there were no state organizations relating especially to farm bureau work in the South and less than twenty in the entire United States. But with the organization of the movement nationally and a glimpse of its possibilities, with its eligibility to membership confined to "state farm



bureau federations and state agricultural associations based on the farm bureau or a similar plan," an impetus was given to the state federation movement, which, with the definite help of the organization department of the national, has now resulted in the organization of state federations in all the states except Pennsylvania and South Carolina. On September 1, 1921, forty-six states, excluding the two states just named, had a total federated membership of 967,279 farmers, or an average of 21,028 per state. The largest number of members in any one state was 124,000 in Iowa, and the smallest number 466 in Nevada.

The local county membership fees, a portion of which constitute the means of financial support of the state federations, varied in 1921 from one dollar in Maine and Utah and in many individual counties in other states, to fifteen dollars in some counties in Kentucky. One state has no fee but raises its funds by assessment. In two states all the counties had a fee of one dollar. In six states the fee varied in the counties from one to ten dollars; in eight states from two to ten dollars, and in six states from five to ten dollars. In nine states all the counties have a uniform fee of five dollars and in fifteen states of ten dollars. The tendency to date has been toward a constantly larger fee.

The proportion of this fee which goes to the state federation also varies widely. In general, it is from fifty cents, as in New York, to five dollars, as in Illinois, with the majority of the state federations collecting from one dollar to two dollars and fifty cents for state and national dues. For the first year or two many of the state federations were financed by flat assessments per county member of from ten to one hundred dollars per county, or a fee of from ten to twenty-five cents per county member, "or such part thereof as many be necessary." This was found to

be inadequate when paid secretaries and other officers were employed. It will be seen then that the incomes of the state federations in 1920 were all the way from a very few hundred dollars in the smaller and more recently organized states, to more than half a million in Illinois, with several of the state organizations receiving more than one hundred thousand dollars.

#### FEDERATION MANAGEMENT

In practically all the states the federations are governed by boards of directors made up of one or more delegates from each member county, the favorite number of delegates per county being one, with an alternate. A few states base the number of delegates on the number of individual members in each member unit, as, for example, one delegate for each five hundred or thousand members. In the majority of the states the extension services of the state colleges of agriculture are represented on the executive boards of the federations. In several states they are not represented at all. The representative is usually the extension director and in some cases the county agent leader also. In practically all the states this representative has no vote on the committee but sits only as a conferee and adviser.

There is no organic relation whatever between the farm bureau federations and the state colleges. Both parties, however, have so much of common interest in the county agent work that they need to consult and advise frequently on many matters of mutual interest. The ex-officio membership of the extension director on the federation executive committee, preferably without vote, provides the opportunity.

## PURPOSES AND WORK

The purposes of the state federations, as stated in their constitutions, are most commonly as follows: (1) to correlate, strengthen and promote the work of county farm bureaus and to develop their work as a state-wide program, (2) to advance, protect and promote the interests of agriculture—"to improve agriculture economically, educationally and socially," (3) to study and to seek the solution of economic marketing and production problems, (4) to secure agricultural legislation necessary to protect and to promote farming interests, (5) to cooperate with the extension service in promoting a program of work. Still another object mentioned is "promoting understanding and responsibility of the farmer to society and of society to the farmer." The first and the last objects mentioned (numbers 1 and 5) are the most characteristic of the Eastern states. Objects (2) and (3) are usually those written in the constitutions of the corn-belt states. Legislation (4) is not very often mentioned, although it has proved to be an important part of the work of many state federations.

It is not always statements in constitutions that determine what an organization will do. Its real objects are more likely to be shown in the actual work which it does in practice.

The promotion of the work of the county agents has been from the very first the principal item in most of the state federation programs. In the words of President Howard of the American Farm Bureau Federation, "the county agent is the keystone of the federation," i.e., he largely determines by his leadership whether the local county unit or member bureau really performs its func-

tion or not. But he has no direct connection with or responsibility to the state federation.

The organization of farmers for the coöperative marketing of their products has been next in importance in the work undertaken; in fact, it has been first in many of the Middle Western states. A great deal of money has been spent in those states on high-salaried men to work on this problem and some good results have been attained. Results have, however, not always been in proportion to expenditures. Some states in other sections of the country have shown that by the use of voluntary committees and public experts, they have been able to accomplish practically as much with little or no direct expenditure.

Probably next in importance has been the legislative activities of the state federations. A number of the states have formulated and carried out quite comprehensive agricultural programs for the protection and advancement of farming, and practically all the states have been able to accomplish a good deal in the way of desirable agricultural legislation. Practically no activity has been manifested in political questions, but work has been wisely confined to farm matters.

These three broad divisions embrace most of the work done, although there are of course a multitude of less important matters.

#### FEDERATION RELATIONS TO COÖPERATIVES

The large activities of the federations in helping to organize and develop coöperative organizations for buying and selling have raised important questions as to the relationships which should obtain between a farm bureau federation and commercial coöperative associations. Two relationships are possible.

The federation may assume responsibility either actually through making the coöperative a department in its organization, as in Michigan, or morally by naming some of its directors or its advisory committee, as in Ohio. At present this is perhaps the most common relationship, but it is likely to prove dangerous and unsatisfactory; dangerous because it makes the federation responsible for what it does not and cannot fully control; unsatisfactory because it will not develop a strong self-sustaining coöperative and because the federation is likely to get the blame for failures and mistakes without the credit for successes.

The other safer and in the end more effective relationship is simply that of service, a helpful support without any control—coöperation as between two self-contained and independent organizations. The federation may in the beginning take the initiative at the request of a group of its members or other farmers, call meetings, secure speakers and experts, and get the coöperative set up and ready to function. After that, the federation's assistance to coöperatives, like that of parents to their children, should be with the view of their acquiring such strength that they may stand alone. But there should always be mutual services and relationships between the federation and the coöperatives as two organizations working in the same general field of agricultural improvement though from different angles.

On the part of the federation certain services may be of great value to the coöperative. Among these the active moral support of the coöperative principle and right with the public and particularly with legislators, will be indispensable. The coöperative will often need legislative assistance and protection of its interests, which the federation may well give. Educational work in connection with the sale of commodities, particularly with reference to

standardization, grading, quality and food value, and publicity as to the public values of coöperative organization, may be made services of great value to the coöperative.

In addition to these important services the farm bureau federation might maintain approved lists of certified public accountants who have specialized in the setting up and examination of the books of associations organized under the coöperative laws. Coöperatives will need also the services of attorneys who are familiar with coöperative laws and their interpretation. As these are quite different from corporation law, it may be very important to have approved lists of such attorneys available. Special aid with traffic problems may also be needed and be very useful. The larger commodity organizations employ their own accountants and attorneys. Some state federations with large incomes may be able to furnish these three services directly with persons in their own employ and thus enable the coöperators to obtain them at less cost. It is important, however, that the commodity handled should pay the cost of such services directly. It should not be subsidized.

Since every coöperative must do a certain amount of educational work in order to maintain its organization and position, and since this is also a federation function, these educational programs might well be jointly planned and executed. This purpose can be accomplished by giving the coöperative delegate representation at the federation meetings. This delegate representation should be with the full privileges of the floor to help formulate a joint program with reference to coöperatives, but without vote on its final acceptance by the federation.

As a further means of maintaining helpful relationships between the organizations on a mutual and independent basis, there should be occasional joint meetings between the executive boards of the federation and each coöperative,

or if this is not practicable, then between sub-committees of the two groups. On these occasions each should discuss its own problems and plans for the future, with a view to mutual understanding and coöperation where necessary or desirable.

On its part the coöperative should give its active moral support and endorsement to farm bureaus and to the federation and its program so far as it can, and is concerned. It should place the federation secretary on its mailing list to receive all printed and circular material sent out by it, including general or circular letters to members, letters to the trade and quarterly, annual or other reports. Especially should the coöperative maintain a regular certified audit and see that the federation gets a copy of this promptly.

Such a relationship puts in practice the fundamentally sound principles of self-help and of service. It leaves responsibility where it belongs and where it will develop initiative and leadership. Yet it provides for coöperation and mutual help. Incidentally, it frees the federation from the oft-made charge of trying to control or dominate all farm organizations by gathering them all under its protecting and fostering wing—a wrong method, a misconception of function and a source of much justified criticism.

#### WOMEN'S WORK

Up to this time women's part in the farm bureau movement has found little expression in the program or organization of the state federations, which have so far confined their efforts to lines of work generally considered as primarily those of men. The special interests of women, seldom given the place in the local farm bureau program which their importance deserves, have not as yet made

themselves felt in the state organizations. Consequently, in most of the states, women have lost, or rather never acquired, the state-wide impetus to the study and the solution of their problems which has meant so much to men's interests. If a type of county and state organization which gives a reasonable recognition to the special problems of the home is provided, these same advantages will, in time, come to women.

There are many reasons why the work of women should at the very least be recognized as one of the most important departments of a state federation, if not as a division of it coördinate with the men's work. It is chiefly to women that we must look for the improvement of our social and community life, as well as for the solution of the more personal problems of food, clothing and of the home life itself. The question of how rural women may be adequately recognized and given a real opportunity to function in a state-wide and national way in the proper relation to the state and the American farm bureau federations has not as yet received the serious consideration it deserves.

As this is being written a national committee of women appointed by President Howard of the American Federation is studying the problem. What this committee will recommend, and how much the directors of the national organization will accept and put into operation, cannot of course be known or accurately forecasted at this time. It would seem that the least that each state and the national federations could do would be to create strong departments within themselves, very largely self-governing, and with their own advisory directorates and secretaries to have charge of women's work. If this is not done there is grave danger either that women will not function at all in the federation movement, and thus that many important



problems may go unsolved, or, on the other hand, that rural women's interests will be swallowed up in those of urban women in a city-controlled organization, such as the Federation of Women's Clubs. This would be as injurious to the movement as to have allowed the chambers of commerce to have continued to dominate the men's work.

The Grange has set a good example of what ought to be done, in its recognition of women with equal rights, privileges and functioning in that order, although even here the initiative of women is not usually sufficiently encouraged to lead women to function in Grange work as fully as the men. In only two or three states, however, is this principle yet accepted and practiced. In New York, where the home department or home bureau is recognized as fully coördinate with the farm department or farm bureau in the county association, this principle is applied to the state also, and a state federation of home bureaus, constituted substantially like the farm bureau federation, has been organized. As yet this state group has no organic relation to the farm bureau federation, as it logically should have if the county plan were to be fully applied to the state, although the same end is secured by mutual understanding and coöperation. Thus the women in this state have the fullest opportunity—and exercise it—to apply their united efforts in a state-wide way to their own problems and to aid the men in the solution of problems common to both.

One of the real difficulties in securing a complete functioning of women in this movement, as in others, lies in their inability to finance it properly themselves. The fact that she does not usually hold the pocketbook seriously handicaps the farm woman from doing her share. The woman's work is usually inadequately financed in the

counties themselves. How then is it to be properly financed in the state and nation? The continued and generous help of the men, together with a separate membership fee for women to enable them to help themselves as much as they can and to have all the funds thus raised for their own work, would seem to be the logical answer.

Whether the New York and Illinois county home bureau plans represent unnecessary extremes in securing the initiative and interest of women remains to be seen. Certainly it needs better correlation with the farm bureau federation if not actual union with it on the county plan. But it is also certain that it has given the rural women of these states a vital part and interest in the movement, resulting in the actual participation of more women in the work, securing more financial support and actual functioning in the home demonstration work and its support, than in any other states in the Union.

#### THE AMERICAN FEDERATION

It is an exceptional American organization that does not aspire to be national. So it was to be expected that there would be many farmers in the organized states who would not be satisfied with the growth of the farm bureau idea to state stature only. These farmers had a vision of a truly national organization, based on units in every county in the United States, which should come to represent all the farmers of America whatever their special interests might be. It was neither their hope nor their expectation, however, that such a national organization would replace, but rather that it would assist and coöperate with other organized farmer groups. These partizans of the farm bureau movement also wanted to extend it to every county and to help to correlate and to unify both county and

state units into a national group with a common basis and common ideals.

As early as 1915 there had been suggestions to this end from Missouri, West Virginia and other states. It was not until February, 1919, however, that anything definite was done looking to the actual organization of a national federation of farm bureaus. In that year, on the initiative of the New York Federation, and as the result of the work of a committee headed by Frank M. Smith of Springfield Center, Otsego County, appointed by it, representatives from fourteen states met at Ithaca, N. Y., to consider the advisability of organization.

As a result of this meeting, a committee of five men, with C. E. Bradfute of Zenia, Ohio, as chairman, was selected to arrange for a larger and more representative meeting at which a national organization should be effected. On November 13-14, 1919, at Chicago, with thirty-one states represented, a temporary organization was effected and a constitution was adopted to be in effect when ratified by not less than twenty states. When the first annual meeting was called at Chicago on March 3 and 4, 1920, twenty-eight states had ratified. J. R. Howard of Iowa was elected President, S. L. Strivings of New York, Vice-President, and John Coverdale of Iowa was selected as Secretary. At the second annual meeting, held at Indianapolis, Indiana, in December, 1920, thirty-seven states qualified sixty-five directors representing 826,816 members. At Atlanta, Georgia, a year later, the third annual meeting showed sixty-three directors from thirty-nine states with nearly a million members.

#### CONTROL BY DIRECTORS

The American Farm Bureau Federation is governed by a board of directors chosen by the member states, one at

large for each state and one additional director for each twenty thousand or major portion thereof of paid-up members in the member county units of the state federations. This board usually meets only in annual meeting, however, and the immediate management of the federation's affairs rests with an executive committee of fourteen. This committee is made up of three members each from four groups of states<sup>1</sup>—the Northeastern, the Middle Western, the Southern and the Far Western, together with the President and the Vice-President ex-officio. The Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Director of the States Relations Service in the Department are also privileged to attend all meetings and to take part in the discussions but without vote in the decisions of the committee. In practice only the Director of the States Relations Service attends these meetings.

In addition, there is a House of Delegates consisting of one delegate from each member state and one additional delegate for each ten thousand farms in that state, who sit with and have all the privileges of directors except the vote. The purpose of this House of Delegates is to bring to the meetings of the Federation large numbers of farmers from all the member counties, both for the information and inspiration they get and the enthusiasm they engender.

The finances of the Federation are obtained by a levy on the member states of fifty cents for every paid-up member in each county unit which is a member of the member state federation. This fee represents an increase, made

<sup>1</sup> The groups of states are made up as follows: *Northeastern*, Mass., N. H., Vt., Me., Conn., N. Y., R. I., N. J., Del. and Penn.; *Middle Western*, Ohio, Ind., Ill., Mich., Minn., Iowa, N. D., S. D., Neb., Kan., Mo. and Wis.; *Southern*, Md., Va., W. Va., N. C., S. C., Ga., Fla., Ala., Miss., Ky., Tenn., Okla., Texas, Ark. and La.; and *Far Western*, Mont., Idaho, Colo., Utah, New Mex., Ariz., Cal., Ore., Wash., Wyom. and Nev.

in 1920, over that first adopted, which called for ten per cent of the dues paid in in each of the member states. This was found to be inequitable as well as insufficient to pay necessary expenses. A few states which did not have a paid membership in the beginning are provided for by a flat assessment of from two hundred and fifty to one thousand dollars, as determined by the executive committee.

#### DEPARTMENTS

As at present organized the American Federation consists of seven departments, as follows: Organization, Legislation, Coöperative Marketing, Transportation, Research, Legal and Information; and in addition, General Administration and Finance Divisions, headed respectively by the President and the Treasurer. For all other departments, except Organization, a director is employed.

The Organization Department, headed by the Assistant Secretary and Treasurer, has been very active in assisting the weaker member states and the non-member states when requested to do so, in completing their organization. The Department of Legislation is located in and does most of its work at the national capital. It has been successful in securing the adoption by Congress of a large part of the Federation's agricultural legislative program for 1921, chiefly through the organization of the now famous "agricultural bloc." The Federation, through its Department of Transportation, has done much good work in securing reductions and adjustments in railroad rates, and has well represented American farmers at many rate hearings. Directors of Grain Marketing, Wool Marketing and Dairy Marketing have been appointed in the Department of Marketing.

The President has also appointed special committees on

grain, livestock, dairy and fruit marketing, representing farmers' organizations and sections of the country which were primarily interested in each commodity, and these committees have done excellent work. The recommendations of the Grain Marketing Committee of Seventeen, which made a thorough study of the subject of grain marketing, have already been put into operation through the organization of the United States Grain Growers, Inc., which in November, 1921, reported 25,000 members owning 50,000,000 bushels of grain. The Livestock Marketing Committee has also made its report. This method of appointing large committees representing the various regional farmers' organizations and the sections of the country most concerned to study their problems together and to make recommendations, has much to commend it and gives promise of excellent results, although it has excited some opposition on the part of other national farmers' organizations, as well as dealers' associations.

The Research and Legal Departments of the Federation function mainly on problems that arise from time to time in connection with the matters which the Federation is handling. An information service has been set up by the Information Department, which now sends out material regularly to the member states and to the public generally by means of news letters; pamphlets, books, cartoons and moving pictures.

#### PURPOSES AND PROGRAM

The purposes and program of the Federation are pretty well shown by the organization and work of the Departments. At the close of the first year's work, President Howard said that its greatest achievement was the public recognition of its representativeness and the confidence

won alike from farmers and from the general public. Resting as it does upon like units in the counties, with its membership made up of the leading and most successful farmers in every community, with the educational background of the work of the county agents and with a rational and conservative program, it is not strange that the Federation has commanded much national confidence and attained national leadership in farmer affairs. Its truly representative character in county, state and Nation have given it an unequaled opportunity to really speak for rural people in the national interest. The Federation has applied the educational principle of self-help as never before. It is rapidly developing national farmer leadership of a high type, rural self-expression and a rural interest in general public as well as special agricultural affairs such as has never been practically realized before. It is becoming a clearing house and a correlating and unifying force in American agriculture. It is making possible national agricultural programs.

The objects of the Federation, as stated in its constitution, are (1) to correlate and to strengthen the state and county farm bureaus, (2) to promote, protect and to represent the business, economic and social interests of farmers, and (3) to develop agriculture. All these are big and comprehensive purposes and hardly to be attained at once or completely. While ambitious in themselves, all these objects are very much to be desired by all and if adhered to they are not likely to lead the organization far afield from its original purposes as so often happens. There are many dangers, however, which must be met and passed before it is certain that the organization is to be a permanent and important factor in American agriculture.

## INFLUENCE OF FEDERATION ON THE COUNTY AGENT

The county agent has generally welcomed the federations, state and national, and has done much to develop and to strengthen them by his support of the idea with his local farmers. They have put new life into his work. As has been already pointed out, the results of county agent work were bound to be very limited so long as his efforts were individual only and not supplemented by those of the farmers with whom he worked. Self help is the only means of making large and permanent progress. So the county agent was early forced to organize the farming people of his county to help themselves. For the same reasons, although he had little to do with them, he was glad to see the state and the national federations organized, because they meant a larger and more active support for his work at home.

The federations have tended to give character locally and greater public recognition generally to the work of the county agent. They have called public attention to it, their influence has brought farmers to its support in greater numbers than ever before and with larger fees, the greater part of which are spent at home. So also the federation influence has often meant the retaining of present county appropriations and the securing of larger ones from unwise or unwilling county appropriating bodies. It also meant better state and national support.

The federations have brought new duties and greater obligations to the county agent, as they have asked him for information through questionnaires and in other ways, as to the problems and needs of farmers. In turn, farmers have wanted help from the federations and the county agent has been the one to pass on their requests and de-



sires and thus help to establish the connection between them and the individual farmer.

It should be made clear that the county agent has no organic relation to either state or national federations. They do not employ him, pay any part of his salary, or have any control whatever over him. Neither is there any organic relation between the United States Department of Agriculture or the agricultural colleges and the state and national federations. These federations as combinations of the county associations are supported entirely by the fees of their members and manage their own affairs. Their relations with the colleges and the Department are coöperative as one independent institution with another. The public partnership through the colleges and the Department is with the local county associations. Thus the county agent has no other obligation to either the state or the national federations than a natural interest in the success of an organization which is most helpful to him and his work.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FUTURE OF THE FARM BUREAU MOVEMENT

WHAT the future of the farm bureau movement, now ten years advanced, is to be only time will reveal. We are all too much a part of it, too much influenced by its functioning to see it clearly now. We can only observe the apparent tendencies of the movement at this time, try to appreciate its advantages and point out to ourselves what seem to be some of its limitations if not its dangers.

Several tendencies are worthy of consideration because they appear to involve the possibility of serious dangers to the future of the movement. Undoubtedly what appear to be liabilities to one observer will be considered assets by another. But at any rate they should be discussed.

#### THE DANGERS OF COMMERCIALISM

One of the most serious of these dangers would seem to be that of getting directly into commercial activities.

The pressure from farmers to put the bureaus into business has been and still is particularly strong in the Middle West. In several of the states where the county agents' work had developed very slowly at first, with indifferent support from farmers, and where the farm bureau idea was new and hence not well understood, farmers were not content to wait for results from slow educational means. They wanted direct and immediate action along economic lines. A few of the state organizations have

yielded to this pressure—some to their sorrow—and this feeling has had a considerable influence in shaping up the policies and the work of the American Federation itself.

The advocates of this policy forget that it is undesirable if not altogether impossible to mix educational and commercial functions and that the farm bureaus have other and equally important things to accomplish for the successful organization and functioning of agriculture. They do not seem to realize that speed of action may not mean quick results and that permanent achievement is usually the result of education. They also ignore the history and the experience of other farmers' organizations, notably of the Grange.<sup>1</sup>

Sound judgment as well as business experience indicate that commercial transactions require a business organization on a local unit and a commodity basis, adapted to this specific purpose, and that this organization must necessarily be so constructed that it is not adapted to do other things equally well. The real question then is, shall this representative organization, builded primarily for educational purposes, be diverted into a single channel and away from its main purpose, and built over to meet one of the problems in the agricultural field, pressing though it may be? Is it not wiser to use it as an educational means to encourage and to foster specific local unit and commodity agencies adapted to the service and which are so constructed that they can meet the problem?

To follow this latter course will be to leave the farm bureau machinery free to continue its educational activities on economic as well as production problems, to complete its program of helping to create and to set up the essential local marketing units based on commodities, to help to

<sup>1</sup> See "The Grange Master and the Grange Lecturer," by Jennie Buell, Chapter I, page 7.

establish and to foster more local agencies, to build up a more adequate and satisfying country life—in other words, to carry out a well-rounded educational program. And the farm bureau movement will have retained its identity and not have been swallowed up by one phase of the problem.

Fortunately, the American Federation under the guidance of wise leadership has decided well in this matter and averted an impending danger. On October 7, 1920, its executive committee declared itself in respect to both state and county units in the following language:

“The farm bureau as an organization shall not engage in commercial activities, nor shall it hold stocks and bonds in organizations undertaking such activities. It may encourage, however, the organization of such activities or industries as may seem necessary or advisable to its board of directors.”

This sane policy is now well-established and generally, though not universally, accepted. There will be many temptations to deviate from it, and it will require clear heads and strong minds on farm bureau boards of directors to administer this policy wisely. Selfish political and demagogic leadership is even now trying to put the farm bureaus into business and to divert them from their larger purposes. The danger of the farm bureaus getting directly into commercial activities will not wholly pass for some years to come.

#### SELFISH VERSUS UNSELFISH SERVICE

Can any organization long endure except as it is built upon the expectation of giving service? Is the farm bureau an end in itself or simply the means to an end? In other words, is the farm bureau an institution built to carry

out an educational program, to give service to individual farmers and to other farmers' organizations and movements, or, is it to be regarded as an organization built up and fostered for its own sake and for the honor and emolument of its organizers? Will the simple building of a great representative national organization of farmers in itself suffice to meet the problems at hand?

Few men, of course, deliberately advise the selfish course. Most men speak for unselfish service. Yet actions often speak louder and carry much more weight than words. And right here some serious mistakes have been made by over-zealous and thoughtless farm bureau officers and members.

Locally and nationally farm bureau federations have sometimes seemed to be trying to take over the work of other farmer groups of much longer standing and to speak for them. Naturally, this does not meet with favor on the part of these organizations. In common with many other less promising movements they have sometimes set themselves up—or seemed to do so—as representing exclusively all farmers and all interests. This is, of course, resented by other farm organizations. As a result there is a considerable feeling in some sections of the country and in certain farmers' organizations, particularly among their officers, that the farm bureau movement is trying to swallow up or to set itself above all others. Part of this feeling is due to natural jealousy of a new and active organization which is doing things which they have been unable to do themselves, and of inefficient individual leaders who see their jobs slipping away from them. A good part of it is probably justified by the circumstances which give rise to it. It is unfortunate because it limits the usefulness of all concerned.

How much better and more advantageous to every one

is the policy of service! Unselfish service is always sure to win in the long run over action taken with selfish motives, and the surest way for an organization to help itself is to be really helpful to other groups.

Most farmers' organizations were created because of definite needs, exist for very definite purposes, and accomplish worthwhile things. In seeking these ends they ought to be assisted and encouraged without thought of self-interest or the effect on the helper, and not ignored, blocked or actively opposed. Most of the jealousies and "scraping" among farmers' organizations, not due to the personal ambitions and spites of individuals, is the result of misunderstandings. The best preventive and corrective to this is frequent conference between the directors, officers and committees whose programs seem to clash. Conferences well arranged and persisted in almost invariably lead to understanding and agreement if not active coöperation.

In a few states the executive committees of the leading state-wide organizations of farmers hold more or less regular conferences under an informal organization, known by some such name as "The Conference Board of Farm Organizations," with a president and secretary and provision for calling meetings as occasion may require. The action of such a group should not be binding on any of the conferees unless it is unanimous. It is usually simply informative, suggestive and advisory, but it leads to mutual understanding and coöperation.

The question of farm bureau relations with other farmers' organizations will have an important bearing on the future of this as well as other farmers' organizations. It involves either a deliberate policy of coöperation consciously followed, or a policy of drifting with consequent lack of good relationship and possibly friction. It is of

vital importance to the future of the movement whether the farm bureau allows itself to drift into a policy of self-seeking and selfishness, or whether it exercises a positive leadership in the policy of always striving conscientiously to be of service to others; service to the nation through its efforts to develop and conserve its food supply, and deliver it to consumers at the minimum cost; service to farmers' organizations by helping them in every way to achieve their objects and to fulfil their ideals when these are worthwhile, as they usually are; and service to individual farmers through helping them to build up and to maintain a sound and a satisfying agriculture; in short, a policy of giving to others rather than one of getting for self.

As the membership and the officers of the farm bureau movement choose, deliberately or thoughtlessly, so is the future of this movement likely to be.

#### LOCAL COÖPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

It seems clear, theoretically at least, that both the public institutions and farmers themselves in the majority of the states believe in a public partnership between local associations of farmers and the colleges for the conduct of county farm bureau work. The principle is generally accepted as sound. But practice does not always accord with the theory. The partnership is too often nominal, and the farmer partner—the local association—weak and merely a convenient local vehicle for the public partner. The farm bureau federations have done much to correct this.

Is real and vital coöperation possible, when the local association does not control its own county funds and has little or no power to determine policies and to adopt or reject a program, except by tolerance or courtesy? True, it can go through the motions in these things, and this may

have great semblance of the fact. But does not this condition limit real and earnest coöperation? Can a county agent really represent the farmer partner, when this partner pays none of his salary, has nothing to say about the amount of it, and has no supervision over his work? Is it to be wondered at that in some states farmers' organizations oppose the farm bureaus and the appropriations for them?

It would appear that ideal coöperative relationships exist in but few of the states. In too many states the public institutions have in the past dominated the partnership either through supplying funds, through provisions of the state law (usually drawn by these institutions), or because of lack of local initiative and local funds. In a few states the local associations have too large a control for the best interests of the public partner. In a majority of the states no definite, clear-cut partnership policy exists, and the resulting relationship is an uncertain one which makes the fullest voluntary coöperation impossible. There is great need for the general adoption of a clear-cut policy in all the states which will fairly provide for the interests of both partners.

Much is to be hoped from the national federation in this respect. Close contact with farmers almost invariably increases one's confidence in their ability and respect for their judgment. This is the verdict of those who have given such contact most thorough trial. The collective judgment of the men on the land is usually sound. False or unwise leadership sometimes leads them temporarily astray.

Respect and confidence must be mutual, and power and authority substantially equal, or at least each must be independently strong in order to insure the best coöperation. If the principle of partnership and mutual and equal



rights and privileges is closely adhered to, as it should be, both policies and program will be jointly arrived at and agreed to on a fifty-fifty basis. To assure this, both parties must provide funds and together administer them, since administration follows funds. The same principle will require the joint employment of the county agent, the sharing of his salary, and the joint supervision of his work.

Having met these standards, the public institutions should then deal with the county organizations in all matters of program, finances, and contracts. The county agent is the joint representative of the public and of the farmer partner, and the relationship which he bears to the farm bureau—the local association of people—should be that of a skilled employee to his employer—as the hired manager of an enterprise in which the local people are co-operating with the public agricultural institutions for the improvement of agriculture. Only by such means can the best local initiative be secured while at the same time the advantages of the public relationship are retained. In some quarters there is a tendency to break up this partnership. Officers of the Department of Agriculture are responsible for some of the tendency toward separation of the county agent and the farm bureau. Jealous of their own share of control of the agents and fearful of the effect of interested or inspired criticism in Congress on appropriations, the Department has sought by agreements and fine distinctions to differentiate the functions of the county agent and the farm bureau and to separate their activities. In this many of the states have acquiesced. The county agent has been restrained, some of the local interest dissipated and separation emphasized. Thus has the farm bureau been pushed into independent and often unwise action by the attitude of Department representatives.

## ALONE OR TOGETHER?

In spite of this apparently well established and quite satisfactory relationship, one of the most frequent proposals of uninformed but enthusiastic persons is that farmers should take over the farm bureau idea and the county agent movement and "run it" themselves, solely for their own benefit. It is a plausible argument. Why not? We believe in self-help. Why accept any aid from the government? Why not be free from this "fettering" alliance with the public to do as we please? No greater mistake could be made.

The present plan of a partnership with the government looking toward the solution of agricultural problems is a new thing under the sun. Federal, state and county governments, departing from their time-honored policy of dealing even with local problems directly with their facilities and personnel, have entered into coöperation with a great group of the population—farmers—to work out the solution of agricultural problems locally and nationally. Which is most in the interests of the farming industry and of the people generally—to have the government attempt the solution of these problems alone and directly, or to try to work them out in coöperation with those who are most concerned and who therefore should know most about them? Is it better for farmers to help the government and to be helped by it in the solution of these problems and in the determination of agricultural policies, to coöperate, or to "go it alone"? The answer is obvious.

The present organization of the farm bureaus is non-partizan. It is in the public as well as the farmers' interests. Organized strictly as a farmers' movement, it will be regarded by the public as partizan whether or not it actually is. In such a case it will lose the public sympathy as well as the public coöperation, and is likely eventually

to find itself in opposition to the great body of consumers. If farm bureaus, for example, should attempt to use their combined power to fix prices or to control the food supply, they would then be dealt with by the government with force. They would be regulated and controlled in the public interest. Is this the end to be desired, or is it better to coöperate?

Few farmers' organizations have succeeded in becoming really national in scope, in fact, there is no truly national farmers' organization at the present time. No group of farmers ever had before it such an opportunity to become really and truly national, based as it is on county units with a common plan and program and coöperating with the government, as that now before the American Farm Bureau Federation. And no farmers' organization ever before had a greater opportunity for service in county, state and nation.

The farm bureau movement has been organized so rapidly and under such pressure from farmers themselves, once they grasped its possibilities, that there has been too great seeking for immediate results for the permanent good of the movement. There is a consequent tendency to short-sightedness and failure to look ahead to the more permanent conditions, circumstances and results. This danger must be avoided. Already temporary economic conditions and the emergency needs of farmers have led the American Farm Bureau Federation into political activities which are taking it farther and farther afield from the original purposes of the farm bureaus. A current news letter of an observing Washington newspaper correspondent (Mark Sullivan) thus describes the present situation:

"Practically the single purpose of the farm bloc in Congress and also of the American Farm Bureau Federation of which the farm bloc in Congress is merely the political agent, is better busi-

ness for the farmer. The farmers' economic distress is the chief cause of their power and the cure of that distress is the chief object of their activity."

This political activity is undoubtedly stimulating interest in the farm bureau just at present and furthering its political prosperity. But this is a temporary and a dangerous tendency. Unless this political emphasis is soon corrected and balanced by a long-time permanent program which will more vitally touch the agricultural needs of the nation such as the better balancing of production and consumption, standardizing and grading of products, the simplification of distribution and the like, this national organization will very likely soon find itself both without a worthwhile program and with an exclusive political label upon it.

Here then is a clear parting of the ways. Two roads lead to the future of the farm bureau movement. Which will it choose? The one leads to a narrow partizan, class-conscious, selfish and probably commercial development, which at the best must be inadequate to meet farmers' needs, and which at the worst may wreck the whole movement. The other road leads to a broad coöperative public service plan in the interests of the whole people, which under right leadership has an unusual chance to succeed. As the membership chooses, and particularly as the leadership leads, so will the future of the movement likely be.

#### A SOUND BASIS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The appeal for farm bureau membership should be based on sound principles rather than on temporary, expedient and perhaps unsound arguments.

The strongest basic appeal to the majority of men and

women for membership in a public association such as the farm bureau is the opportunity for unselfish altruistic service to their neighbors, their communities, and their counties, state and nation. This desire must be satisfied. "Getting my money's worth" is a secondary consideration. But service received is important.

Sustained or permanent membership in any organization depends solely on the realized opportunity for each member to be of service to others and upon value received by him in satisfaction and service. Signature to life membership pledges, drafts or checks should be regarded solely as helpful aids to the collection of dues. Memberships of individuals in the organization, obtained upon promises impossible or unlikely of fulfilment, or upon misrepresentations of any sort, are liabilities rather than assets.

The farm bureau is a broad public service agency, not a class organization or a trade union seeking only the advantage of its own members; but state and national federations do function to protect and promote the interests of farmers. Appeals to class advantage and comparison of dues and fees with those paid by labor unions are dangerous expedients.

The large membership fee has the advantage of larger investment by the individual and greater resources for the organization. It also has some disadvantages. It may seriously limit the number of members, barring those of small means who perhaps most need help; or, on the other hand, it may lead to paid "drives" which gather in members on false promises—members who have little sympathy with or interest in the work. Larger fees mean increased responsibilities and obligations for service. The size of the fee is not as important, however, as the relation between the fee and the opportunity for service and the service rendered.

Membership campaigns should be based primarily upon the local community and county programs of work and only secondarily upon state and national federation programs. These latter are too far away, their results generally too intangible and too difficult of application to the individual to make them a safe primary appeal for membership. Furthermore, the individual, perhaps, finds it difficult to participate in the work of these organizations. His greatest opportunity lies with the local program, and this should always be held out to him as the main reason for membership—an opportunity to serve his community and county and as the chief source from which benefit is likely to come to him.

#### THE FUTURE

It is hard for the writer to think of county agent work as apart from that of the county farm bureau. They are and should be almost indissolubly bound up together. The future of the one is the future of the other. County agents are jointly employed by a partnership of public institutions and county associations of farmers. The two partners work hand in hand with the closest coöperation and with practically the same objectives. This is as it should be, and this coöperation between agencies representing science on the one hand and practice on the other, augurs well for the future of the movement.

The county farm bureau may, of course, if it chooses, undertake other things than simply supporting the work of the county agents. And it is conceivable that this may overshadow the county agent's work, and even lead to its abandonment. In such cases the farm bureau may be expected to develop into a single track agency of some sort—possibly political, but more likely commercial. Eventually,

if it did not perish in the attempt, it would probably become organized on a local unit and commodity basis; and if this were soundly done, we should have another farmers' buying and selling or marketing organization which might well serve a very useful purpose in that particular field. This would necessarily limit the usefulness of this organization to this one piece of work, and leave the rest of the field untouched so far as this organization was concerned.

As for the county agent work, under present state and federal laws, it must go on as before. The county agent system has become an integral part of government policy and plan; and because it rests upon permanent legislation it will probably remain so. The county agent will continue to deal with the whole range of problems—economic and social—which affect the profitableness of farming and the satisfying character of country life, with all the educational facilities at his command. To do this to the best advantage and with the greatest efficiency, it will probably always be necessary to coöperate with a local organization of farmers.

#### A FARM BUREAU CREED

Summarizing, then, the ideals expressed in this volume for the farm bureau movement may be put in the form of this brief creed:

We believe in self-help for ourselves, our community, our country; in our own abilities well developed and properly supported to solve our own problems; and in local and voluntary leadership.

We believe in organization and all that it signifies; group association in matters of common interest and for common ends, for educational, for social and for economic improvement. We want this organization to be inclusive and not

exclusive, based on the interest of individuals and not on their ability to pay, and directed by persons who are leaders because of their soundness, honesty and forward-looking achievements.

We believe in a program, a definite, carefully considered plan of work, local in conception and in character, which looks toward the solution of the problems which are vital to the welfare of the farm and the home. This plan of action for the organization should be made at home by those most concerned, but with the best expert advice and assistance.

We believe in a partnership between farmers and the public agricultural agencies—between practice and science—for the working out of this program. We hold that the public—the consumer—has as vital if not as direct an interest in agriculture as does the farmer, and as great an obligation to support the program and to help carry it out.

We believe in education and in demonstration as the most important means to the ends of individual and of group improvement and of social and economic betterment, education for efficiency in production, for marketing and for distribution. We believe that it is as necessary and as much in the public interest to teach and to demonstrate efficient methods of buying and selling as it is to show how to produce larger and better crops.

We believe in service as the great end and goal—service to individuals, service to groups and organizations, service to the general public.

THE END



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